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Illustrations from MYTHOLOGY

by

WILLIAM EDWARD BIEDERWOLF

VOLUME I
of a
SERIES

GLAD TIDINGS PUBLISHING CO.
Calhoun and Superior Sts. Fort Wayne, Indiana.

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By
William Edward Biederwolf.

FOREWORD TO THOSE WHO VALUE THE USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS



“A good illustration is the supreme art of logic” says a master preacher. Some preachers can preach a good sermon without an illustration. Most of us cannot. We are inclined to think the best sermon without an illustration would be a better sermon with an illustration in it. Illustrations are, as Moody once said, “windows to let the light in,” and if we can get men to see the Kingdom it will take less of argument to lead them into it.

This volume is not a compilation. We have gone to the original sources of Classic Mythology, have drawn, as a rule, our own illustration from it, and clothed it in our own language. In this sense they are new, many of them not having been used even in the author’s own ministry.

Never hesitate to use an old illustration. Though old in itself it is always new to the great majority. And new people are always coming along. It is for this reason that we have used a few of the stories as the basis of illustrations long in use, though they have been clothed in new language. The illustration is too good to be for-

gotten. Then too, the author had the younger minister in mind.

There is an immense fund of permanent illustrative material to be found also in the fields of art, literature, science and history, and if the reception of this volume seems to warrant it, it is the author's hope to follow it with another, and others if time permits, from other sources than mythology.

He has already been repaid for his labor in the joy of living once more in the rare atmosphere of the great classic past, but he will rejoice far more if he is made to feel by the reception given this volume, that he has been helpful to others in their chosen life's work of telling the story of God's dear Son to a needy world.

William Edward Biederwolf

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Illustrations from Mythology

*Alcestis Dying
For Admetus*

*Atonement
Vicarious Death*

1

John 3.16; Eph. 2.16; Heb. 2.7; Gal. 1.4

I like that theory of the Atonement best which Barabbas must have had on the morning of the Crucifixion. No one can read the beautiful story of Alcestis and Admetus and fail to see the place which the idea of substitutionary sacrifice occupied in the mind of the Greek. "Ask," said Apollo to Admetus, "what boon you most desire," and Admetus answered, "Grant that I may never die." But this was one thing that not even the gods could grant to mortal men. Apollo, however, prevailed upon the Fates to give consent on condition that Admetus could find some one else to die in his stead. For many years Admetus lived in happiness and great love with Alcestis, the beautiful daughter of King Pelias, little dreaming how difficult it would be to find a substitute for him when his time came to die. When that hour arrived he besought first his aged father and then his equally aged mother, both already near to death's door, but each said, "No, life is precious even when you are old." He besought his friends and kinsmen but they were deaf to him. Among his soldiers, all of whom would have gladly died for him on the battlefield, not one was found will-

ing to take his place upon the bed where he lay helpless in the presence of death. At last his beautiful wife came and said, "Admetus, I will die for you and gladly." Admetus sought then a reversal of the decree but to no avail; and proudly Alcestis went down into Hades in his stead. There is a further touch of beauty in the story as it goes on to tell how Death was overcome by the mighty Hercules and Alcestis, rescued from its power, was brought again to life. It is impossible not to discover here certain ideas not far removed from what we see exemplified in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. The Greek was not a stranger to the idea of substitutionary sacrifice, this divinest of virtues that came to its perfect and all-prevailing expression in Jesus Christ. As such He was my Substitute. When there was no one else in all the universe who was able or willing, He stood in my place and bore the just deserts of my sin. He was stripped that I might be robed; He accepted thorns that I might wear the crown; He was cast out of the city of David that I might obtain entrance into the New Jerusalem; He died that I might live.

"There was One Who was willing to die in my stead,
That a soul so unworthy might live;
And the path to the Cross He was willing to
tread,
All the sins of my life to forgive."

W. E. B.

*Minerva's Statue
The Palladium of Troy**The Bible, the Bulwark
of Civilization*

2

Matt. 7.25; Ps. 33.12; Ps. 119.105; Prov. 13.34

How often we have heard it said that the Bible is the Palladium of our American civilization. The word comes to us in connection with the fall of Troy. Helen, the fairest of her sex, was living happily in Greece with her husband Menelaus, when Paris of Troy, coming to Greece, became their guest, and falling in love with Helen, persuaded her to elope with him to Troy. It was for this cause that the Greeks besieged the famous Trojan city. The Trojans were the proud possessors of a celebrated statue of Minerva called the Palladium. In this statue the Trojans rested their security, claiming that it fell from heaven and believing that the city could not be taken so long as the statue remained in it. Among the Greeks were two: Ulysses, famous for sagacity, and Diomedes, second only to Achilles as a hero. These two entered the city of Troy in disguise and carried the Palladium away to the Grecian camp. Soon after this the city fell.

Yes, it is true the Bible is our Palladium. It is no idle aphorism that the spiritual and moral strength of this nation corresponds to the Christian faith of her citizens, and without that kind of

strength no nation can become really great or have any abiding civilization. And the Bible is the source of the Christian's faith. To ignore the Bible is therefore to become the inheritors of a decaying civilization. The Palladium, indeed! Not of a worthless, superstitious charm like Minerva's statue, but of a mighty quickening power that gives to a people the elements of real worth and to a nation the source of real ability to preserve and prosper. Let this Book be taken from us and our boasted civilization will be doomed.

W. E. B.

*Proserpina in the
Clutch of Pluto*

*Concern for Loved Ones
Passion for Souls
Dangers of Youth
Allurements of Sin*

3

Ps. 142.4; I Peter 5.8; Prov. 1.10; Ezek. 33.8

“Hurry, papa; the alligator's got me,” cried a little lad who had been playing by the lagoon while his father was busy felling a tree back a bit in the woodland. The monster had been hibernating and had slipped up, hungry and voracious, upon the unsuspecting child. But there are monsters of another kind, as hungry and destructive, and even more so, dragging away

the youth of our land, tearing to pieces their virtue and feeding upon the very life-blood of their souls. They cry aloud but it seems there is none to help, and I am reminded of Proserpina caught in the clutches of Pluto, the dark and gloomy god of the underworld, the government of which he was given by his brother Jupiter. Proserpina was the daughter of Ceres, goddess of the fruits of the earth. She was a beautiful maiden and a great favorite among her companions. She was gathering violets one day along the shore of Lake Pergus,

“where the fresh soil
bears purple flowers and keeps perpetual spring,”
when suddenly the earth opened and Pluto, the ruler of Hades, who had seen her and had become enamored of her, caught her and carried her off to the lower regions. Ceres, busy always with seedtime and harvest, heard the piercing scream for help but when she came to the place her daughter was gone. It is said that when Proserpina cried for help her voice was heard by all the mothers of the earth, and each, thinking it was the cry of her own child, ran quickly to the rescue, though all of them came too late. The truth is that if all the daughters, and the sons as well, who are gripped fast in the jaws of sin, held by the devil of passion and other soul-destroying demons, could but make their sad plight vocal, their voices would be heard crying aloud in every community, “Hurry, hurry; hell’s got hold of

me!" But even so they would oftentimes cry in vain, for all too much the ears of the mothers and others who ought to care are so filled with the hum of business or the whir of pleasure that either they do not hear or hearing they do not sense the seriousness of the danger, while all the time the ravishing traffic of the grim and ghastly Demon from the underworld goes on.

W. E. B.

*Apollo's Passion
for Humanity*

*Concern for
Unsaved*

4

Phil. 2.8; Lu. 19.10; John 6.33; Matt. 20.28

Apollo, born of Jupiter and Latona, was the god of the sun. Mythology has given to the youth of the world no better ideal than this sun-god who loved justice and required of those who worshipped him clean hands and pure hearts. Born in Delos, where his mother had fled to escape the wrath of jealous Juno, he ascended at once to the celestial world on the cloudless heights of Mount Olympus, where dwelt the gods and where in the great hall of his father's palace the lovely goddess Hebe handed around to the heavenly deities at their daily feasts the ambrosia and the nectar on which they lived, while Apollo, who was also the god of music, delighted them

with the tones of his lyre. Apollo's popularity was much in evidence and he might have stayed and passed his time amid the joys and delights of his heavenly associates. But he was possessed of a passion for humanity and his breast was stirred with a desire to better the conditions of the dwellers on the earth. Accordingly he declined to stay in his father's palace, and came down to earth to establish good laws, to promote civilization, to heal the sick, to relieve distress and to be the saviour of mankind in general. But this is only, "the fictitious narrative of an event that never happened." But there was a God, One who actually came from heaven, the only begotten Son of His eternal Father. He came to earth as the Redeemer of its people, and the thing that brought Him was His own undying passion for humanity. All the way from the Throne to the Manger and back again by way of the Cross it was a continual outpouring of Himself for the sake of others. And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. Alas that we should be concerned about so many things and be so little concerned about the thing that was the master passion, the sole passion indeed, of His great heart.

"Must I go and empty handed,
Thus my dear Redeemer meet;
Not one soul with which to greet Him,
Lay no trophy at His feet."

W. E. B.

*Laocoön and
the Serpents**Concern for
Loved Ones*

5

Deut. 4.9; Sol. 8.1-2; Ps. 142.4; Gen. 44.30, 34

The Greeks in the siege of Troy, after repeated efforts to force an entrance into the city, built a huge wooden horse, which they filled with soldiers, and then left before the gates of the city as a pretended propitiatory offering to Minerva. The Trojans came out of the city and gathered about the strange thing, which was certainly a great object of curiosity, and wondered what to do with it. Among them stood Laocoön, the priest of Neptune, with his two sons. Suddenly there appeared, advancing over the sea, two immense serpents. They reached the beach, and with frightful hideous mien made their way directly to the spot where stood Laocoön and his children. They began at once to attack the children, and when Laocoön saw his two sons encircled and wound about with the mighty coils of the hissing monsters from the deep, he sprang to their rescue, and in attempting to save his children, he too, lost his life, for he was soon involved with them in the serpents' coils, and all his efforts were overpowered, and the three of them were strangled and crushed in the poisonous folds.

What will parents not do to save the lives of

their children? But alas! that they should be so indifferent to their spiritual danger, and see them facing death without an effort to save their souls. A father will not see his son in danger without giving his life to save him, and yet is it not true, as Courtland Meyers has said, that "this same father will see his child standing on the very edge of the precipice, hanging in the balance above the world of the lost, and will not hasten to the rescue."

W. E. B.

*Nemesis, the
Avenging Deity*

*Conscience,
A Guilty*

6

Job 15.21; Isa. 59.9-14; Roman 2.15; John 8.9

The old Greeks personified conscience, and called it the goddess Nemesis. First, she is the personification of reverence for law, and last she becomes the angel of vengeance, overtaking with fullest retribution the reckless transgressor.

I shall never forget a picture seen in my boyhood. A prodigal fleeing for his life, a thousand sins stirring his soul like a tempest, his eyes staring from his sockets; behind him a swiftly flying Nemesis, with a flashing weapon uplifted, ready

to strike him down. The poor wretch cannot escape the blow.

Thus is every sinner pursued by the avenging Deity, whose sword is sharp and swift and sure.

Selected.

*Nemesis and
the Furies*

*Conscience, the Remorse
of Future Punishment
Sin, the Curse of*

7

Col. 3.25; Mark 3.29 (R. V.); Mark 9.44, 46, 48;
Rom. 2.15

A noted convict in a certain penitentiary complained that the prisoners on the other side of the wall were taunting him with his crime. There were no prisoners on the other side of the wall!

Nemesis was one of the lesser divinities of heaven. She was supposed by the Greeks to be the goddess of vengeance, and her figure occupied always a place by the side of the judge in every court proceeding. Under her served the Furies, Alecto the relentless, Tisiphone the avenger, and Megaera the grim, three woman-like creatures, with writhing snakes instead of hair, holding in one hand a torch and a whip of live scorpions in the other. With the first, representing the awakened conscience, they revealed to the trans-

gressor the hideousness of his crime, and with the second, representing the scourge of remorse, they whipped the soul of the evil-doer and rebel against the laws of heaven.

Sin is a boomerang. It is its own avenger. A large part at least of a man's judgment he carries about in his own breast. If this is true in this life, assuredly it must be true in the next life. We wonder if this is not in part at least the meaning of that Scripture where we are told that a man may be guilty of "eternal sin." There is a fire that is never quenched, a worm that never dies. What other is this than something somewhat like the ancient Greeks had in mind in their economy of punishment when both the living and the dead were made subject to the torment of the Furies, haunted while on earth and followed even over the river Styx into the dismal shades of Erebus. Thus it has ever been and thus it ever will be until the Son of Man can say of us as He said to the palsied man of Capernaum, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven."

W. E. B.

*The Cranes of
Ibycus**Conscience,
A Guilty*

8

Job 15.21; Prov. 28.1; Rom. 2.15; Heb. 10.22

Conscience is the alarm bell of the soul. Offended, and instantly the hand-writing appears on

the wall, though no other on earth be conscious of your guilt. It brings sleepless nights to the eyes; it has caused guilty men to sweat in agony.

Ibycus, according to fable, was a famous lyrical poet of Greece, who was murdered by two villains while on his way to Corinth to compete in the Isthmian games. As he fell beneath their murderous strokes, he saw flying above a flock of cranes, and being the only living creatures in sight, he called upon them to avenge his death. His body was discovered and his fate caused all Greece to mourn. Thousands upon thousands were gathered in the open theatre at Corinth for the games and among them the two robbers who had slain the poet. The Furies were represented clad in black, and called vengeance upon him who had done the deed of secret murder. Suddenly a cry burst from one of the upper benches, "Look, comrade, look! Yonder are the cranes of Ibycus." The multitude looked, and above the theatre they beheld the passage of a flock of cranes. The startled cry of the guilty man led to the discovery of the murderers and the death of Ibycus was avenged.

The cranes of Ibycus thus passed into a proverb to express the voice of conscience in the soul of the guilty. It is true of every man who has done wrong, that there is within him, "a silent court of justice, himself the judge, himself the jury, and himself the prisoner at the bar, ever condemned."

W. E. B.

*Orestes and
the Furies**Conscience,
The Accuser*

9

Heb. 10.26, 27; Prov. 28.1; Job 15.21; Rom. 2.15

It is true that “conscience hath a thousand several tongues, and every tongue condemns” us for our wrong.

While Agememnon was off to war, his wife, Clymnestra, became false to him, and with her paramour planned his murder on his return, which plot they successfully executed. Orestes, the son of Agememnon, was then a lad, but as he grew up the thought of avenging his father’s death never left him, and when the hour of vengeance came, he slew both his mother and her unlawful lover. This slaughter of a mother by her son, though it brought just retribution upon the guilty, was an act of awful abhorrence.

Among the Olympian gods were three who punished crimes by their secret stings. They were called Erinnies or the Furies, and their heads were wreathed with serpents. These avenging deities seized upon Orestes, and drove him frantic from land to land. Byron alludes to this in his “Childe Harold”:

Oh thou who never yet of human wrong
Leff the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!
Thou who didst call the Furies from the abyss,

And round Orestes bade them howl and
and hiss."

Orestes finally took refuge with Minerva at Athens, and although the Furies were there to accuse him, the goddess had mercy and purified him from his crime.

Sinner, of one thing you may be sure; your sin will not only meet you at the judgment, but it will haunt you and hound you through life. God pity the man who must cower before an accusing conscience; who must shudder at the thought of approaching death, and tremble at the thought of the oncoming judgment of God. There is but one refuge, and that is in Christ. In Him there is no condemnation.

W. E. B.

*Ulysses and
His Bow*

*Consistent
Living*

10

Matt. 5.16; Lu. 6.46; I Tim. 4.12; II Cor. 3.2

One of Emerson's terse and telling epigrams is this; "What we are sometimes speaks so loud people can't hear what we say." It is said that Adelina Patti, of the marvelous voice, one time lost her passport, and sang a song to prove her identity. And we are reminded of Ulysses who handled his bow for the same purpose. While

absent at the siege of Troy his faithful wife Penelope, annoyed by suitors, after waiting ten years and thinking Ulysses dead, at last gave promise of her hand in marriage to the one who should shoot an arrow through twelve rings with the bow that Ulysses had used in other days. In the meantime Ulysses had arrived and disguised as a beggar was present on the day of trial. The first thing to be done was to bend the bow in order to attach the string. One by one the suitors stepped forth to prove their prowess and amidst the laughter and jeers of their companions confessed it was a task beyond their strength to perform. Then spoke Ulysses, "Beggar as I am, I was once a soldier and there is still some strength in these old limbs of mine. Let me try." The suitors hooted at him and demanded that he be turned out of the hall for his insolence. But to gratify the old man Penelope bade him try, when, lo! with ease he bent the bow, adjusted the cord to its notch and sped the arrow unerring through the rings. It was Ulysses, indeed! and Penelope threw herself into his arms. What little use to profess if our actions belie the profession we make. It is not so much for us to *say* we are Christians as it is to *prove* it by the life we live. It was Venning who said, "In religion not to do as thou sayest is to unsay thy religion in thy deeds, and to undo thyself by doing."

W. E. B

*Clytie and
Apollo**Constancy
Fidelity*

11

Heb. 10.23; Eph. 6.18; Rev. 2.10; James 1.6

One of the most pleasing stories of Grecian mythology is that of Clytie and Apollo, the god of the sun. Clytie loved Apollo, but her love was not returned. Clytie, in disappointment, sat day after day upon the damp earth and pined away. She gazed upon the sun from the moment he rose until his setting, and at last, so the story runs, her limbs took root in the ground, and her face became what we know today as the sunflower, always turning upon its stem to look upon the sun in his daily course through the heavens. So the sunflower that grows in the garden has become the emblem of constancy.

Some people are as fickle as a changing dream, and too many of God's own professed followers are vacillating, changeful and unstable. Too often, alas, they have their faces turned in other directions than His, and some have even forsaken their first love.

Clytie's constancy was born of love, and so will yours and mine be if we ever come into the place where Christ can depend on us. We are told to remember Jesus Christ, who is the Sun of Righteousness, and if we loved Him this would be the most natural thing to do. We would think of

Him always, and our faces would always be turned toward Him and the light of His countenance would make us strong.

W. E. B.

*Theseus and His
Father's Sword*

*Determination
Difficulties Overcome*

12

Ps. 37.24; Heb. 12.1, 2; Phil. 4.13; I John 5.4

Aegeus, so the story goes, upon his departure to Athens, buried his sword and his sandals beneath a stone, and told his wife that as soon as his yet unborn son became strong enough to lift the stone and take them from under it, she should send him to Athens. The child was born and named Theseus, and when he had learned of his father and the condition of his going to him, his one sole determination was to lift the stone. He spent hours at it; he tugged and pulled time after time, but in vain. Year after year he impatiently toiled but he could not achieve. The stone seemed rooted to the earth. In fact, it seemed to be sinking farther into the ground, but Theseus believed the time would come when his strength would be more than a master for the ponderous, sluggish thing. And it did. It always does to a soul like his. One day he gripped it with his mighty arms, placed his broad breast against it,

put his whole brave heart into the lift, and the stone stirred; another mighty heave and it turned upon its side. He girded on the sword, strapped on the sandals, and went forth to Athens. He did many wonderful things, and achieved for himself the splendid destiny prophesied by his determined youth.

Determination knows no obstacles. Determination discovered America. It laid the Atlantic cable after it had broken six times. It gave to us the perfected phonograph; and baptized by the spirit of God, it has given us every holy life that has ever lived.

W. E. B.

*Ulysses and His
Bag of Winds*

*Duty, Neglect of
Watchfulness
Almost Saved But Lost*

13

I Thess. 5.6; Rom. 2.1; I Kings 20.40; Gen. 4.7

In that prison book of Oscar Wilde's, which he so fittingly called "De Profundis," this strange genius said, "I must say to myself that I ruined myself, and that nobody great or small can be ruined except by his own hand." There is a good illustration of this in Homer's "Odyssey" where Ulysses fell asleep upon the bag of contrary winds. He had arrived in his homeward

journey at the island of Aeolus, to which monarch Jupiter had entrusted the government of the winds. Taking pity on the storm-tossed wanderers Aeolus imprisoned in a leathern bag, tied with a silver string, such winds and tempests as might be hurtful to their further voyage, and giving the same to Ulysses, bade him guard it carefully every moment, and at the same time commanded the gentle Zephyrus to blow the bark toward Attica, the homeland whither they were journeying. Ulysses one day lay down to sleep, using the bag for a pillow, and while he slept the crew conferred about the mysterious bag imagining that it must contain some great treasure given by King Aeolus to their commander. Thus tempted they loosed the silver string, when instantly the storm and the tempest winds rushed forth and beat them back to the shores of the Aeolian island just as they were almost within the port of the homeland. I wonder if it is not true—indeed, the Word of God says it is—that God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; that the winds and hurricanes of avarice and unholy ambition and passion and other tempests that sweep up from the caves of the underworld to overwhelm us and drive us upon the rocks, God has put within our power to restrain. And yet how often spiritual aims are frustrated, hopes are dashed and one's very soul lost even within sight of the heavenly homeland by the storms that sweep over the sea of life.

And always the blame attaches to none other than one's self. Let us not censure the One who is the Ruler of earth and sea and sky. He gives us the gentle Zephyrus to waft us on and locks the tempests in the hollow of His hand subject to our will, but if our neglect, our disregard of His word, our trifling with evil let loose upon us the storms that beat us back and bring disaster, let us acknowledge our shortcomings and pray for greater grace to do His will. "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober."

W. E. B.

*Ulysses Sowing
Salt*

*Duty,
Shirking One's*

14

Matt. 25.42-45; Luke 14.18; Jud. 5.23; Jer. 1.6

Paris was the son of Priam, King of Troy. He had stolen the affections of Helen, the wife of Menelaus, and carried her off to Troy. Whereupon Menelaus called upon his brother chieftains of Greece to avenge him of his wrong and assist him in the recovery of his wife. Thus came about the famous Trojan War. The chieftains all responded nobly except Ulysses. He had just married the beautiful Penelope, and was very happy with his wife and child and much preferred, for

his own convenience and self-indulgence, to be left out of the troublesome affair. Ulysses did not, therefore, respond to the call, and Palamedes was sent to Ithaca to urge him. Ulysses, unwilling to go, feigned insanity. He yoked together an ox and an ass, and began plowing the sand and sowing salt.

Why are we always excusing ourselves when we hear the call of God? The unconverted have oxen to prove, land to cultivate, wives to entertain and other insane excuses; but why should not we, who are called Christians, be always quick to do the will of God? But instead, too often like Ulysses, we find it convenient to be otherwise engaged, and oftentimes in works as insane as his, if only we have some pretext to plead in excuse for not answering God's plain call to duty.

W. E. B.

*Perseus and
the Minotaur*

*Duty, The Call of
Patriotism, Real*

15

Jonah 1.2; II Sam. 23.20; John 2.15; Jud. 5.23

In mythology you read the story of how in the Isle of Crete there dwelt a terrible monster known as the Minotaur, and from the people of Athens every year this fierce and ravenous brute

demanded a tribute of seven young maidens and seven youths. Always on a certain day in the history of Athens these fourteen youths and maidens were chosen by lot and compelled to take farewell of home and friends and go out into the haunts of the Minotaur to satisfy the monster's terrible appetite.

There are monsters like that among us today, ripping into shreds the virtue and devouring the manhood and womanhood of our youth, monsters more terrible and more voracious than the fabled Minotaur of Greece. More than four hundred lives a day are offered up as a sacrifice to the monster of intemperance, the liquor traffic. Gambling has devoured its thousands and public prostitution its millions.

The story tells us that a splendid and courageous young man whose name was Perseus, incensed at the outrage, volunteered to attack the monster in its lair. He followed it through the labyrinth and the dark windings of the cavern and after a terrific struggle, he brought the brute down to death. How quickly, if such a monster lived to-day, would every man with one spark of manhood in his breast, go out alone and single handed and do him battle to death, and what our country is crying for today is such an aroused public sentiment as will crystalize into a mighty and irresistible determination that will send our forces of righteousness out like some Perseus of old against these monstrous and Godless iniquities

and put an end to their devilish destroying influence forever. Has your own soul been stirred? Are you doing your part in the crusade?

W. E. B.

*Aeneas and the
Charms of Dido*

*Duty, Dereliction of
World, The Lure of*

16

Jer. 2.19; Matt. 6.24; I Tim. 5.6; II Tim. 2.4

When the ships of Aeneas, storm-tossed by reason of Juno's anger, were finally anchored in safety before Carthage, Aeneas and his fellow-Trojans found themselves most hospitably entertained by Dido, the gracious queen of the newly founded colony and rapidly rising city of Carthage. Aeneas recited for her the story of the fall of Troy and his own adventures which followed, and Dido, charmed with his exploits, fell deeply in love with him and besought him and his companions to terminate their danger-attended wanderings and find a home in Carthage. So pleased were they and so content was Aeneas with the certain prospect of a bride and a throne that they tarried month after month as time rolled away in pleasant intercourse. Like Hylas, who "neglected his task for the flowers in the way," these men, as if, like the companions of Ulysses, they had eaten of the Lotos-food, lost all thought of the land to which they were journeying and of the high destiny to which they had been called. It took the direct intervention of Jupiter

to arouse Aeneas to a sense of duty, a message having been conveyed to him to this effect by Jupiter's son, the wing-footed Mercury. And thus many a child of God has been lured from the path of duty and exchanged a noble purpose for the delights and emoluments of this world. Life to no man has ever been given to be "whiled away in aimless dreams," but of all mankind should it not be expected of the Christian that he should live and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he has been called. But like the youth climbing the enchanted hill, at every step of the way are the beckoning hands, and the entrancing voices to call us from the way. "My soul be on thy guard," and if you, my brother, have forgotten to any degree the holy ideals to which you committed yourself when you first turned your face in the direction you knew God would have you go, may He, by some messenger, by some providence, by divine intervention of some kind, call you back again today.

W. E. B.

*Achilles Skulking
in His Tent*

*Duty, Self Interest Before
Patriotism, Lack of
Shirking Christians*

17

Eph. 2.4; Col. 3.14; Mk. 11.26; I Cor. 16.13

Church members who give themselves to nursing some little personal grievance while the in-

terests of the Church and the Kingdom call in vain for their loyalty and their help remind me of Achilles sulking in his tent while the cause he had enlisted to defend suffers defeat at the hands of its Trojan enemies. Homer makes Nestor, the "wondrous old man," say of this piqued and peeved warrior,

"Achilles with unactive fury glows,
And gives to passion what to Greece he owes."

Agamemnon, commander in chief of the Grecian forces, had insisted that Achilles yield to him a beautiful maiden which had fallen to his share in the division of the spoils. Achilles grew sullen, retired to his tent, and declared that he would take no further part in the war. In the battle which followed the Greeks were driven from the field. They sent an embassy to Achilles telling him of Agamemnon's offer to give the maiden back with ample gifts to atone for the wrong he had done to the great warrior. But Achilles was deaf to their entreaties, and great hero that he was, all that was praiseworthy about him is forgotten when you think of his pouting away in his tent while out in the thick of the battle his brave comrades are beaten back and slain. And it is like this with some Church members, some professing Christians. No matter how much the Church needs them; no matter how much the Kingdom is calling for support, their mighty issues and destinies are as nothing compared with the wounded personal feelings, the little slight,

the real or fancied wrong. Something the preacher said; a neglected pastoral call; the majority vote; or, perhaps, the sermons do not please—for these and other trifling and unworthy reasons many a professed Christian will forsake his Church and forget his obligation to the Kingdom of God. In heaven's name, why do we go to Church? Let us hope it is to worship God, and with this these things have nothing to do.

W. E. B.

*Diana's Temple, The
Debtor's Haven* *Economy
Debt, Exemption from*

18

Prov. 21.20; Prov. 6.6-8; Num. 35.11; Matt. 6.12

The goddess Diana, in the city of Ephesus, gave to such debtors as could fly into her temple, freedom and protection against their creditors; but the sanctuary of economy and moderation in expenses, into which no usurer can enter to pluck them thence, and carry away any debtor prisoners, is always open for the prudent, and affords them a long and large space of joyful and honorable repose.

Selected.

*Momus, the
Critic**Fault Finding
Criticism*

19

Jas. 5.9; I Cor. 13.1; John 12.4, 5, 6; Phil. 4.11, 12

Of all the disagreeable characters, the Lord relieve us of the chronic fault-finder, the proverbial wet-blanket-thrower. Momus, who was said to be the son of Night, was the god of criticism, the god with a carping, mocking spirit, who always found something to criticize, no matter how loud might be the praise of others. Jupiter, Neptune and Minerva, so the story goes, once contended which one of them could make the most perfect thing. Jupiter made a man; Minerva made a house; and Neptune made a bull. Momus began by finding fault with the bull because his horns were not below his eyes so that he might see when he butted with them. Next he found fault with the man because there was no window in his breast through which the thoughts of his soul might be read, and lastly he found fault with the house because it had no wheels to enable its inhabitants to remove from bad neighbors. When he could trump up nothing against the lovely creature, Venus, he complained of the noise made by her sandals when walking. Mount Olympus was the home of the gods, and so unpopular did this Momus become because of his cynical, carping disposition that the other gods took counsel

together and banished him from the mount, telling him that a fault-finder could never be pleased, and that it would be in order to criticise the works of others when he had done some good things himself.

There are others like him today. You find them in the home, in the church, and everywhere. They live in the shadows and take a sombre view of everything. They are always ready to bury a corpse before it is quite dead. Nothing suits them because they could have done it so much better themselves, but they never do. It is a miserable mission—living to find fault. It takes a little wisdom to be suggestive; the smallest understanding can do this other.

W. E. B.

*Orestes and
Plyades*

Friendship

20

II Tim. 1.16-18; I Sam. 18.1; Prov. 17.17; Ps. 35.14

There is a remarkable example of friendship told of such as never heard of Him who is the friend of sinners. It is so remarkable indeed that it procured divine honors to Orestes and Pylades from the Scythians, a race so bloody, rude and savage, that they are said to have fed on human flesh and made drinking cups of their

enemies' skulls. Engaged in an arduous enterprise, Orestes and Pylades, two sworn friends, landed on the shores of the Chersonesus to find themselves in the dominions and power of a king whose practice was to seize all strangers and sacrifice them at the shrine of Diana. The travelers were arrested; they were carried before the tyrant, and doomed to death, were delivered over to Iphigenia, who as priestess of Diana's temple, had to immolate her victims. Her knife is to be buried in their bosoms but she learns before the blow is struck that they are Greeks, natives of her own country. Anxious to open up a communication with the land of her birth, she offers to spare one of the two on the condition that the survivor will become her messenger, and carry a letter to her friends in Greece. But which shall live, and which shall die? That is the question. The friendship that has endured for years in travels, and courts, and battlefields, is now put to a strain it has never borne before, and nobly it bears it. Neither will accept the office of messenger, leaving his fellow to the stroke of death. Each implores the priestess to select him for the sacrifice, and let the other go. While they contend for the pleasure and honor of dying, Iphegenia discovers in one of them her own brother! She embraces him; and sparing both, flees with them from that cruel shore. Both are saved and the story, borne on wings of fame, flies abroad, fills the world with wonder, and, carried to distant regions, excited

such admiration among the barbarous Scythians that they paid divine honors to Orestes and Pylades, and deifying these heroes, erected temples to their worship.

Selected.

*The
Bleeding
Tree*

*Generosity, Forced
Unwilling Givers
Stinginess*

21

II Cor. 9.7; I Tim. 6.10; Acts 20.35; II Cor. 8.12

Like the tree in the ancient myth, which uttered a moan and bled whenever a twig was broken off, some men writhe when forced to give for the glory of God and the salvation of men.

Joseph Cook in Monday Sermons.

*Hercules Attacked
by the Pigmies*

*God, Defiance of
God, Rebellion Against
God, Submission to*

22

Ps. 2.4; Job. 33; 12.13; Rom. 9.20; Acts 5.39

The folly of a man who lives in defiance of God! The pigmy creature of a day who says, "I will not" to the infinite and omnipotent Lord God of

hosts! The mighty Hercules, who was the earth born son of Jupiter, became the national hero of Greece. As an infant it was said of him that he strangled two serpents with his hands. For a crime committed during a spell of insanity, sent upon him by the jealous Juno, he was afterwards compelled to perform a succession of desperate undertakings known as "The Twelve Labors of Hercules." Shortly after his defeat of Antaeus in their mortal wrestling match, he was found asleep by an army of pygmies who made preparation to attack him as if they were about to attack a city. They would prepare for battle while he slept and count upon their numbers to overcome him when the attack was on. In the midst of it all, the mighty hero awakened out of his sleep and laughed at them, and having laughed he wrapped a large number of the little warriors up in his lion's skin and carried them away to Thebes as a present to his cousin. Listen, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision." Oh man, woman, why do you want to fight against the Almighty One? Can you not see that when, as a rebellious sinner, you go about shaking your puny, pigmy little fist in the face of God, and smashing with your unholy life His divine laws and holy commands, you put God up against a very serious proposition. He could annihilate you in a second if He wanted to. But He does not want to. He loves you and in

His love He gives you a Saviour instead of the stripes you deserve for your rebellion and your sin.

W. E. B.

Juno's Revenge *God, The Compassion of*
for the Slight of Paris *Not Vindictive*

23

John 14.9; I John 4.8; Lu. 15.20; II Pet. 3.9

Some people have an idea that God is a revengeful God, that He is a vindictive God and delights in punishment and in blood. But such is not the God whom Jesus said He came to reveal. Our God is not like the fabled gods of Greece and Rome whose animosity and petty spite work made Virgil exclaim, "In heavenly minds can such resentment dwell!" Paris, son of the Trojan king, you may recall, in deciding a beauty contest between three of the goddesses, gave the prize to Venus. Juno, one of the three, never forgot the slight Paris thus put upon her, and when the Trojans, after the fall of their city, were sailing prosperously on their way to Hesperia (Italy) their destined future home, she felt her old grudge revive. Accordingly she gave orders to Aeolus, the wind-god, to let loose from his cave the storm-winds and bring confusion upon the sea. The ships bearing Aeneas and his com-

panions were driven from their course before the raging gale and would have been wrecked upon the rocks had it not been for the timely help of Neptune. Later when they were safe within their promised land and Juno found Latinus, the king, friendly disposed towards them, her old animosity began again to revive. She summoned one of the Furies and stirred up discord to such an extent that bloody war between the Latins and the Trojans ensued.

But if you have thought that ours is such a God, moved by resentment and revenge, it is simply because you do not know Him. The only place in all the Bible where God is represented as running is where the Prodigal's father runs out upon the way to welcome back his wayward boy. Jesus said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The only perfect revelation God ever made of Himself He made in Jesus Christ, and if you'll look at Him through Jesus Christ you'll know what kind of a God He is. Read the story of Christ's wonderful life, full of tenderness and compassion and forbearance, and if you want a single word to characterize it all, you will have to take four letters and write over it from beginning to end the word, "Love." And that is God.

*Hector and His
Frightened Child**God, The Character of
Revealed in Christ*

24

II Cor. 5.19; Col. 1.15; John 14.9; Heb. 1.3

“He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,” said Jesus to the perplexed and questioning Disciples. Among the masterpieces of Thorwaldsen, the Danish sculptor, there is perhaps none more finely conceived or more artistically executed than that of Hector’s farewell to his wife and child. Homer, too, in his Iliad, has given us a beautiful version of the story. It was at the gates of Troy through which Hector was about to pass to his last battle, for in the encounter that ensued, he met the mighty Achilles and went down before his “far-shadowing spear.” Andromache had accompanied him to the gates and with her came the nurse bearing in her arms their infant child Astyanax. The moment came when the father must say “Goodbye,” and as he reached out his hands to take the little one in his arms his burnished helmet and waving plume so terrified the child that it turned and clung crying to its nurse’s neck. Surmising the ground for the little one’s fear Hector took off the fierce and shining armor from his head and laid it on the ground, and instantly, laughing through its tears, the child leaped into its father’s arms. And so it is when

men think of the majesty of God, His divine splendor and awfulness they are afraid and taken back. If God revealed Himself only as the Almighty One, and men were forced to contemplate only His resplendent glory, the terrors of His justice, and the terribleness of His throne, these things would strike them deep with awe and from such a God they would naturally shrink. But Jesus said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and just as the father of the little child of our story laid aside his fierce armor and revealed himself in all the tenderness of paternal affection, so, as another has said, "God veils His glory and splendor and awfulness and reveals Himself in Jesus Christ to His children in the sweetest aspects of His love."

W. E. B.

*Euclides and His
Hunger for Knowledge**God, Knowledge of*

25

John 17.3; Eph. 3.18; II Pet. 1.5; Prov. 2.5

Euclides was a native of Megara, and the founder of the Megaric sect of philosophers. While a student of Parmenides he heard of Socrates and determined to become his follower and removed from Megara to Athens. But while he was there an enmity arose between the two cities,

and a decree was passed that any inhabitant of his city should forfeit his life. So he removed about twenty miles from Athens; but at night he would travel the distance concealed in a long female coat and veil to visit his master.

He furnishes a splendid illustration of Samuel Johnson's saying, "A desire for knowledge is a natural feeling of mankind; and every human being whose mind is not debauched will be willing to give all that he has to get knowledge." And this is especially true of that highest of all knowledge, that end of all knowledge, and of which the Scripture says, "If thou seekest her as silver, and seekest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God."

George MacAdams.

*Thor and His Contest
With the Giants*

*God, Resisting
Omnipotency*

26

Neh. 4.8-15; Acts 9.5; Gen. 6.3; Acts 7.51

How many thousands have fought against conscience, fought against conviction, fought against the providence of God, against His goodness, the strivings of His spirit, and the resistless oncoming of His kingdom forcing itself upon them, but have found it hard, and have at last given up the

conflict and owned Him conqueror. To surrender thus is to be wise. To do otherwise is to engage against the inevitable, against omnipotent power and eternal principles. It is to be much like Thor, a god of northern mythology.

Thor made a visit to the abode of the giants, where he was put to a test of his power. First, he challenged the giants to a drinking match. They produced a drinking horn and told him it was an ordinary feat to drink it dry at one draught. Three mighty drinks, long and fierce, Thor took, but made little impression. "Not quite so stout as we thought thee," said the master giant, "now see if you can lift this cat." Trifling as the feat seemed, Thor with all his god-like strength, could but bend the cat's back a bit, and detach one foot slightly from the ground.

Thor now became impatient, and cried, "Who have you who will wrestle with me?" and the giants laughed. "Try that old woman there," said one. Thor, now quite ashamed of himself, seized the toothless old lady, but in a few moments measured his length upon the earth. As Thor departed, the chief giant said, "Don't grieve over your failure, for you were trying impossible things; the horn you tried to drain was the sea; the cat you tried to lift was the Mitgard Serpent, the great world-snake, which with tail in mouth girdles the earth; and as for the old woman with whom you wrestled, she was Old Age, Time,

Duration, and there never was a man nor never will be, but she will sooner or later lay him low."

W. E. B.

*The Goddess With
Medussa's Head*

*God, Not Vindictive
Misjudging*

27

II Cor. 5.19; II Pet. 3.9; Ps. 86.15; Heb. 12.29

It is not at all strange that some people are not moved with a becoming sense of love and loyalty to God, when it is understood how grossly fictitious and absurd is their conception of Him. The God that some people think of is a veritable Medusa's head, the very look of which turns the heart to stone. Of gods like this the ancient felt their need—revengeful, hard-hearted, full of spite and cruelty. Medusa was a cruel monster with hundreds of writhing, hissing snakes growing from her head instead of hair. So hideous was her aspect that no living thing could look upon her without being turned into stone, and all around the cave where she dwelt could be seen the petrified figures of men and beasts who had dared or chanced to catch a glimpse of her features.

Perseus, you will remember, undertook to slay the monster. With the winged-sandals given him by Mercury he flew to the place where she dwelt; with the helmet given him by Pluto he rendered

himself invisible; with the shield given him by Minerva he caught the reflection of Medusa's image without looking directly upon her; and with the sythe-shaped sword, given him also by Mercury, he cut off the frightful creature's head. This snaky head, which, though severed from its body, lost none of its strange congealing power, Perseus bestowed upon the goddess, Minerva, she who sprang full-panoplied from the head of Jupiter, and with her battle-cry awakened the echoes of heaven and earth. Minerva fixed the head in the middle of her shield, and what the goddess did with this to her enemies can quite well be imagined.

But if one imagines ours to be a god disposed at all like the fabled deities of ancient story, small wonder that he cannot become enthusiastic about a god like that. In my youth I read that "Jesus wiped away the red anger-spot from the brow of God," and I thought of God only as a frowning Ruler of the universe Who delighted in punishment and Who was angry with everybody because of their sins, and Whose ire and wrath could only be satisfied by the shedding of blood. But this is not the Christian God, and to so believe is both a needless misconstruction of His Word and an outrage upon His love. His Word says that He was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and the Incarnation of Jesus Christ was but a living revelation of the loving nature of God. O man, see if you cannot bring yourself to believe in the

love of God, for I believe if the world could but so believe the call to the unconverted would cease forever; for it would melt the hardest heart and put a new song in every mouth, even praise unto our Lord.

W. E. B.

*Hercules and
Eurystheus*

*God, The Will of
Submission to His Will
Peace, The Way to*

28

Josh. 18; Heb. 12.6; Ps. 40.8; Rom. 12.2

It was Longfellow who said, "To do what God wills is the only science that gives us rest." The soul that seeks in all things to do that will has a continual Sabbath within itself. Alcemene had given birth to Hercules whom Jupiter, the father of the lad, had vowed should be the greatest and most famous among men. But the immortal Juno, always jealous of the off-spring of her husband by mortal mothers, contrived by her arts that Hercules should be rendered subject to his cousin Eurystheus and be compelled to do his bidding. This Hercules disdained to do. Eurystheus, though a king in Greece, was a most commonplace sort of a person with even less than ordinary courage, and why should Hercules, the strongest and most famous man in the realm,

make a slave of himself to this, his weakling kinsman whom he scorned. This thing which heaven willed Hercules declined to do. But as a result peace departed from his soul and he fell into such a state of mind that people began to think he was haunted by the Furies. He wandered out alone among the forests and the mountains and in his despair he felt as if the demons from Hades were hunting him day and night. Restless and miserable he sought the oracle at Delphi where he was told that if he would be happy he must obey without question the decree of the gods and serve Eurystheus. The battle with his pride was not an easy one to win, but at last he took the road to the palace of his cousin, and as he went each step became quicker, gladness filled his heart, the shadow left his soul and his troubled mind was at peace. It has ever been so. The story is told of a saintly old theological professor who lost his temper one night and drove a fellow townsman from his house. He went to bed, not to sleep, but to toss in agony through the night, and long before morning he arose and crossing the city knocked at the other man's door and said to him as the door opened, "O my brother, I have come to ask forgiveness. I did not have the spirit of Christ when I spoke to you as I did and I am sorry I so misrepresented the cause of Him whom I serve." The man was much moved, for he was an unbeliever, and it was this confession that became the means of his conversion, but the present

point of the story is that the old professor went singing back to his home with a spirit that was light and free. God's way may not always be the easiest way to take, but at the end of the way there is peace.

“Thy precious will, O conquering Saviour,
Doth now embrace and compass me;
All discords hushed, my peace a river,
My soul a prisoned bird set free.
Sweet will of God still fold me closer,
Till I am wholly lost in thee.

W. E. B.

*Orion's Vision
Restored*

*The Gospel, Its
Transforming Power
Christ, the Light of the World*

29

I John 1.5, 7; John 1.8, 9; Eph. 1.18; Mal. 4.2

One of the most interesting myths is that which relates to Orion, the son of Jupiter, a giant and a mighty hunter, who fell in love with Merope, the daughter of the king of Chios, and sought her hand in marriage. During the days of his wooing he gave exhibition of his mighty prowess by clearing the island of its wild beasts and bringing the spoils of the chase as a present to his beloved. Impatient with her father's delay in giving con-

sent, he sought his coveted bride by violence, whereupon Oenopion, the father, enraged by such an act, decided to rid himself of Orion's presence. Accordingly while Orion was in a drunken stupor Oenopion put out his eyes and cast him out on the shores of the sea to die. Orion, however, instructed by an oracle to seek the rays of the morning sun, made his way to the east, and as he journeyed, gazing ever towards the rising sun, he received his sight again. Orion was afterwards, when killed by Diana, placed among the stars. Oh my brother, those of us who have been "called out of darkness into His marvelous light" know what it is to have the inner vision blinded by the god of this world, to have eyes that see not, to sit in appalling darkness with all the glorious truths and divine realities in general lost to sight. But there is One Who is full of light, of pity and of love, and you can, if you will, turn your blind face toward heaven until the Sun of righteousness arises with healing in His wings, until He Who looseth the bands of Orion shines upon you and turns the shadow of death into the brightness of the morning light.

W. E. B.

*Minerva and the
Brain of Jupiter**Growth in Grace
Holiness
Perfection
New Birth, The*

30

I Peter 2.2; Eph. 4.12, 13; I Peter 1.16; Heb. 6.1

People say, "Do you believe in holiness and perfection?" Assuredly we do. There is nothing more real in the universe and nothing more evidently taught in the Bible. But to hear some people talk of holiness and perfection you get the idea that for them at least the maximum of spiritual attainment has been reached. There are two points of difference between the birth that makes one a child of God and that of the ancient goddess Minerva who is said to have sprung from the brain of her father. If you want to know more about this famous "blue-eyed maid" you may read Ruskin's interesting story of "The Queen of the Air." She was the favorite of all the daughters of Jupiter. Just what sort of a sensation the great Jupiter, or Zeus, as the Greeks called him, must have felt in his head on the morning of Minerva's birth is difficult to imagine. One is almost tempted to believe that Vulcan must have broken open his skull with a blow from his "far-sounding hammer," but at any rate, so the story goes, Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, sprung from her father's head full-

grown and full-armored, agleam with all the panoply of war.” Now, of the differences mentioned the first is this: The birth that makes one a child of God is real, but this other is not. The story of Minerva’s birth is, “the fictitious narrative of an event that never happened.” The second is that no man ever thus comes forth from the hand of the regenerating Spirit of God in sudden, mature, and perfect sainthood. But it was “for the perfecting of the saints” that certain gifts were given unto men, “for the edifying of the body of Christ till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

W. E. B.

*Actaeon and
His Dogs*

*Habit, The Power of
Sin, The Consequences of*

31

Hos. 8.7; Rom. 6.23; James 1.15; Num. 32.23

There is one thing you must never forget; that your sins will one day hunt you down, and if there be no way of escape your own iniquities will consume you.

Actaeon was a celebrated huntsman who incurred the displeasure of the goddess Diana. The goddess, in her wrath, transformed the of-

fender into a deer. While the body of Actaeon took the shape of a deer, with pointed ears and bracing horns and hairy, spotted hide, his own consciousness remained. What should he do? He was ashamed to go home, and afraid to stay in the woods, and while he hesitated, his own dogs discovered him and rushed after him like the wind. Into the forest, through the gorges and over the cliffs, Actaeon flew with his dogs, baying loud, close after. At last one fastened itself upon him, and a few seconds later the whole pack, "with bloodshot eyes and red jaws dripping foam," buried their teeth in his flesh; and the beasts he had taken pleasure in and had cheered on in the chase, were now turned upon him to rend and tear out his life.

It is ever thus with sin, but for us, thank God, there is a way of escape. When Bruce of Scotland was pursued by his own bloodhounds he entered a stream, waded up the current three bowshots and left on the other side, and when the dogs came up the trail was broken. Even so for you and me, "there is a stream filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins," and poor hunted sinners, we may plunge in and escape forever the wrath that pursues us.

W. E. B.

*Fenris and
the Chain**Habit, The Power of*

32

Prov. 5.22; II Tim. 2.26; James 1.15; Jer. 13.23

One of the wierdest pieces of ancient superstition comes to us out of the mythology of the Northmen. There was an evil deity, Loki by name, who was given to all sorts of mischief and fraud. One of his children was Fenris, the wolf, who was the source of much annoyance to the gods. The gods determined to chain him, but he broke every fetter, no matter how strong it was, as if it had been a thread of silk. The gods in their despair took counsel with the mountain spirits, who made for them a wonderful chain, which was called Gleipnir. The chain was strange indeed. It was composed of six things, the spittle of birds, the breath of fishes, the nerves of a bear, the beard of a woman, the roots of stones, and the noise made by the foot-fall of a cat. The chain was soft and smooth and light, and did not seem to have powers enough to hold anyone who had a determination to break from it. Fenris suspected some enchantment about it, but upon promise from the gods to release him if it should prove too strong for him to break, he allowed himself to be bound with the apparently harmless thing. But when once he was bound,

he found to his dismay that the chain was too strong for him. Neither would the gods help him in his distress.

Just so do men fall; just so are men deceived; just so does this indulgence or that seem harmless, and even innocent, and men yield themselves to it. But there is a hidden strength in many of the things that lure men on to sin, and men have little dreamed that some day they were to be bound fast forever. "The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices make instruments to plague us."

W. E. B.

*Antigone Giving Burial
to Polynices* *Heaven
Death, The Christian View of*

33

Phil. 1.21; II Cor. 5.11; John 14.2; I Cor. 15.55

King Creon had forbidden, on pain of death, anyone to give burial to the body of Polynices, but Antigone, upon hearing that her brother's body was thus deprived of those rites which were considered essential to the repose of the dead, determined to brave the hazard and to bury the body with her own hands. She was detected in the act and when for this violation of the king's

edict she was condemned to be buried alive, she thus replied:

“I knew before
That I must die, though thou had’st ne’er
proclaimed it,
And if I perish ere th’ allotted term,
I deem that death a blessing. Who that lives
Like me encompassed by unnumbered ills,
But would account it blessedness to die?
If then I meet the doom thy laws assign,
It nothing grieves me.”

And such was the Greek conception of death. “Unnumbered ills” were not things to endure like a good soldier, as Paul admonished Timothy, but things the rather for which one should curse God and die, as Job’s wife admonished him to do, and death was but to “meet the doom of violated law.” But what a contrast with the Christian’s hope! For him death is but the opening of a gateway through the merits of Christ into a fuller, richer, more abundant life. In the eventime the shepherd leads the sheep home, and if you contrast the death of the Greek, who knew not Christ, or one who is without Christ today, with a Christian’s dying, the difference is to be seen in just that. The one is going he knows not whither but he is not going home. At best it is a strange dark land into which he enters with bewildered steps. But the Christian, thank God, at eventide the Shepherd

leads him home. One day for you and one day for me the journey will begin and we will say, "Whither now?," and the Great Shepherd of the sheep will say, "Home."

W. E. B.

*Calypso Enamored
of Ulysses*

*Heavens, The Home
of the Soul
Worldliness, The Lure of*

34

Heb. 11.3; I Peter 5.9; I Cor. 15.28; Prov. 1.10

There is a song which a few years ago was very popular at all the great religious assemblies, the first lines of which are as follows:

"I am a stranger here within a foreign land;
My home is far away upon a golden strand."

If you have read the *Odyssey* of Homer, the song just mentioned may bring to your mind as it does to mine the lines which the poet puts in the mouth of Ulysses on the occasion of his experience in the island of the sea-nymph Calypso, who became enamored of Ulysses and wished to detain him forever, offering to share with him her immortality:

"In vain Calypso long constrained my stay,
With sweet reluctant amorous delay;
With all her charms vainly Circe strove,

And added magic to secure my love.
In pomps or joys, the palace or the grot,
My country's image never was forgot:
My absent parents rose before my sight,
And distant lay contentment and delight."

Calypso promised Ulysses everything that human heart could wish, and by every alluring art within her power sought to satisfy him with residence within her kingdom and with her. But Ulysses knew himself as a stranger in a foreign country and nothing could cause him for a moment to forget the homeland whither he was journeying, and, unlike Aeneas enamored of the queen of Carthage, he insisted on going on to Ithaca. And so, too, as the writer of Hebrews says, is the child of God a stranger and a pilgrim on earth seeking a country of his own, and while he must tarry until the purpose of his sojourning is accomplished, his will be a poor bargain, indeed, if he allows the allurements of this world to make him unmindful of the soul's true home, whose delights are as the comforts of the house of the prodigal's father compared with the husks upon which this world had fed him.

*Jupiter and His
Olympian Abode**Heaven, The Way Into
New Birth, The*

35

John 3.7; John 10.9; Eph. 2.9; Acts 4.12

Jupiter was the god of all the world. He dwelt in the sky above the heights of Mt. Olympus. He became the father of many earth-born sons and daughters, and these all he called into his heavenly dwelling-place and made them immortal like himself. Only such as were "born of him" could attain to this high distinction. But mortals have ever sought to "climb up some other way," ways forbidden and impossible, but which men have tried in seeking inheritance among the hills of glory. With the heathen antediluvians it was by the stairway of the Babel tower; with the giants who troubled Jupiter it was by piling the mountains upon each other and storming the golden gates that opened into the sunny regions where Hebe served the ambrosial food and poured out nectar for the gods. And so it is with men today, ever seeking to "climb up some other way." Especially by their morality and their good works they think to obligate the Eternal One to open for them the gates of glory when the time for their departure has arrived. We are told of a man who dreamed that every time he did a good deed it put a rung

in a ladder by which he could climb into heaven. At last but two rungs remained to go in and then heaven's gate of pearl would roll back on its jeweled hinges. And, behold, when these had been done, and he stepped upon the last rung thus made, the gates rolled back, and there in the entrance way stood Jesus, who, with His finger pointed straight in the man's face, said, "I am the door; he that climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber!" Except a man be born of God he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

W. E. B.

*Prometheus
Bound*

*Hell, Its Torment
Sin, Its Consequence*

36

Mark 9.44; Rom. 6.23; Ezek. 18.4; Matt. 25.46

There are no magic waters of Lethe in hell where one may bathe and forget. Prometheus bound to the rock with the vulture forever gnawing at his vitals, is, according to the Greek play of Aeschylus, the representative of man in justifiable rebellion against the unreasonable gods. He defies the lightning of the supreme deity, Jupiter. He contends that he is right and has done right and that Jupiter has been unjust. As for Prometheus, as much as "we love him and ad-

mire his courage and high spirit," we feel the truer meaning of the fable is found in the awful price one pays for sin. Against such gods as Prometheus opposed one might well rebel, but to those who believe in the true God a rebel against Him could never be regarded as the friend and champion of man. Prometheus had tried by cunning to conquer the strength of the gods, and among other things he had stolen fire from heaven and carried it down to men in a hollow tube that they might learn to forge tools and arts and wealth might arise upon the earth. But this drew down upon himself the anger of the Olympian Jupiter, who cared little for human happiness, and by his order Prometheus was chained to a rock on Mount Caucasus, there to linger out the long years of eternity while a vulture was sent to feed constantly upon his living flesh. What is this vulture but the emblem of an eternal remorse? The Scriptures say of the wicked that in the place of torment "their worm dieth not." What does that mean? Does it mean that some horrid, fiery-eyed, centipede-like worm, with a hundred slimy tenacles dripping strange pollution, will strike its fangs into the naked flesh of the writhing, shuddering sinner? No, it means the scorpion sting of memory and the biting remorse of a guilty conscience. Some people will have it that all the awful descriptions of future punishment are figurative and metaphorical. So they may be, but if I know anything about the meaning of

a figure or a metaphor, I know they can never, never even approximate the reality they seek to describe, and I beseech you, my brother, to make up your mind to escape these things whether they be figurative or not.

W. E. B.

*Autolycus,
The Thief*

*Heredity
Sin, The Consequences of*

37

Ezek. 18.2; John 9.2; Ex. 20.5; Gen. 4.7

Some people are given quite freely to shifting the responsibility for their shortcomings to the laws of heredity and environment. What a multitude of sins such things are made to cover and what an apology even for deviltry they sometimes become. Charging such responsibility to one's heredity brings to mind the story of Autolycus. His father, Hermes, was worshipped as the patron god of thieves, being himself a thief than whom there was none greater in the realm. The Greeks evidently were not so wise as some of our modern scientists. At least they seemed to feel that moral qualities as well as physical were to some degree matters of inheritance, and Autolycus, who was a most dexterous and cunning thief, being the son of Hermes, was supposed to inherit this convenient propensity from his

father. He was possessed of the strange power of rendering invisible any article he had stolen and was further able to transform himself into various shapes to avoid detection. Autolycus, however, was not accounted responsible for his evil disposition or the acts resulting from it because it was conceded that it came to him by inheritance. But neither heredity nor environment nor any other force which enters into the shaping of human life and destiny can excuse us from our sin and its dread consequence. You may not be responsible for being in the water when you are drowning. Some one may have pushed you in. But when a life line is thrown out within your reach you are responsible for going down if you decline to lay hold on the proffered means of rescue and permit yourself to be pulled out of the condition and its attending danger in which you find yourself. You may not be responsible for the force that drags you down but when power to pull you up is placed at your disposal you are responsible for the result if you refuse to avail yourself of the way of escape. Do you know what the Scriptures have to say about it? They say, "In those days they shall say no more, the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge."

*The Garden
of Hesperides**Home*

38

Ps. 126.6; I Tim. 5.4; Gen. 18.19; II Kings 20.15

The American home must be redeemed else our children are lost. The four daughters of Atlas, who sustained the world on his shoulders, and of Hesperis are said to have guarded the golden-fruited garden of the Hesperides. As the story goes, Juno was the goddess of the household and upon the occasion of her marriage to Jupiter Earth came to the wedding and brought as a wedding present a branch full of golden apples. Far over the western sea, on the western coast of Africa, it is said, was the Greek Paradise, known as the Garden of the Hesperides, so-called in honor of Hesperis, the wife of Atlas. To this place Juno sent the golden apples declaring that only in the loveliest garden in all the universe was it fitting for such precious fruit to grow. Over this golden fruit of the sunset Juno placed the four maidens just mentioned. These were named Aegle, which means Brightness; Erytheria, which means Modesty; Arethusa, which means Ministering; and Hestia, which means the Spirit of the Hearth. The Hesperides Garden of modern times is the Home. The home ought to be the brightest, happiest place on earth. A romp with the

children is like a tonic for their souls. In its sacred soil blushing modesty ought to thrive like an indigenous flower; here the ministry of loving service ought to find its truest expression; and finally, the real home is the place of fireside companionships, with a bit of good reading, good story-telling, good music, interesting, helpful conversation, and of course, a bit of family worship, with all this means for the children, who are one day to go out from beneath the parental roof and stand face to face with temptation in the world. Such virtues make the home like Tom Moore's vase, perfumed by the roses that it carries.

W. E. B.

*Pygmalion and His
Living Statue*

Ideals Realized

39

Col. 3.1; Phil. 3.13, 14; Ps. 1.1; Eccles. 2.26

Our ideals are worthless, time-wasting day-dreams unless they become living actual factors in our own experience.

Pygmalion was a bachelor who saw so little to admire in the best of women that he resolved to live without a wife. He was a sculptor, and resolved to carve in ivory his ideal of a perfect woman, so far as possible. His skill was marvelous enough indeed, and so beautiful was the

statue he carved that he fell in love with his own creation. He would lay his hands upon it and caress it; he bedecked it with becoming garments, placed jewels on its fingers, kissed it, called it wife, and wished that it might live. At the festival of Venus, which was just at hand, he besought the assistance of the goddess of love. Venus signified her favor, and Pygmalion returned to his home. He pressed his lips against the lips of his statue, and they seemed to be as real as his own. The virgin felt his kisses and blushed, and to Pygmalion's great joy, opened her eyes and fixed them upon her lover.

A high ideal in character can never compensate for imperfections in the character which is really ours, and if an ideal does not in some degree become to us a living actual reality, it will become a spectre in days when it will be too late to mock us for what we are. But how shall the ideal become real? Of ourselves we are often as impotent as Pygmalion, and like him, we need a diviner power than our own.

We may never attain fully. "No man," said Theodore Parker, "is so satisfied with himself that he never wishes to be wiser, better, and more holy." But it is gloriously true that each of us, like the sculptor of ancient myth, may beseech a higher power, and through divine assistance, realize in some degree our highest ideals in natural life.

*Tithonus and His
Foolish Wish**Idleness
Ease in Zion
Self-Indulgence*

40

I Tim. 5.6; Prov. 19.15; Phil. 2.12; Amos 6.1

How foolish it is to measure life by the number of its years. In Tennyson's *Tithonus* we hear the sad lament of the white-haired shadow of one who foolishly chose never to die. Aurora, the goddess of the dawn, had fallen in love with Tithonus, son of the king of Troy. She promised to grant him whatever boon he desired, whereupon Tithonus said, "My wish is that I might live always so that I may look upon the color of your beautiful wings every morning forever." Aurora prevailed upon Jupiter to grant the request but forgot to have youth joined in the gift, so that while Aurora remained always as young as ever Tithonus grew old, and bald, and toothless with his body full of aches and pains. At one hundred the beauty of Aurora's wings began to lose their charm for him; at two hundred he cared for her no longer, and at three hundred he begged permission to die. But as Tennyson puts it, "The gods themselves cannot recall their gifts." And so it came about that the old man began to shrink and shrivel until Aurora caring no longer for him, turned him into a cricket. Tithonus had thought of nothing but getting up

each morning to see the sun rise. Just to do this he seemed to think was to make life worth while forever. He forgot that we live in deeds, not in figures on the dial. But there are those for whom life's chief value consists in the opportunity it affords to feed upon the beauty of Aurora's wings, and whatever else of pleasure and luxury and indulgence the world can give. Others live only for the world's wealth or its applause. But what an empty thing this makes of life! Aye, what a tragedy! Some men live more in a day than others do in a year; more in a year than others do in a lifetime. We are not here to play. As some one has put it, "The world is dying for a little bit of love," for the sound of your voice and mine, and the touch of our hand in a bit of sacrificial ministry to heal its bleeding wounds. And God forgive us if we have sought merely to live and not to serve.

W. E. B.

*Hercules and His
Poisoned Robe*

*Immortality
Resurrection*

41

I Cor. 15.53; Job. 14.14; John 11.24; II Tim. 1.10

Nessus, the dying Centaur, had given Dejanira, the wife of Hercules, a portion of his blood as a charm to preserve the love of her husband, and

when jealous of a fair maiden named Iole, she decided to try the love-spell. She steeped a beautiful robe in the blood of Nessus and gave it to Hercules to wear, but as soon as the garment became warm on the body of Hercules the poison penetrated into all his limbs and caused him the intensest agony. He tore off the garment but it stuck to his flesh and with it he tore away whole pieces of his body. Dejanira, on seeing what she had unwittingly done, hung herself, while Hercules prepared to die. He ascended Mount Oeta, built a funeral pyre of trees, lay down upon it, spread his lion's skin over him and commanded the torch to be applied. Now Hercules was the son of Jupiter and the gods upon Olympus were troubled at seeing this great champion of the earth thus brought to his end. But Jupiter said, "Fear not. Only his mother's share in him can perish; what he derived from me is immortal. I shall take him, dead to earth, to the heavenly shores."

This is but a fable but it illustrates a glorious truth. The Greeks knew that death was not the end of that which is divine in man. They felt the pull of another life within the soul even as men feel it today. Plato and others of his time reasoned well to prove it. Jupiter, the father of the gods, is made to speak well for his time, but we have surer testimony than instinct or reason ever gave. We have the sure Word of God Himself. As one born into the family of God there is a part of us, the larger part, the vastly superior part,

in fact the real self, which death can never touch; for are we not told that "this corruptible shall put on incorruption and this mortality shall put on immortality"? And it was said of Hercules that when the flames had consumed his body "the diviner part seemed to start forth with new vigor." So when "the mother's share" in us has perished, the soul, untrammeled by every earthly sense, shall come to its eternal heritage in fullness of nobility, of honor and of glory. It is a tremendous thing to be the offspring of God.

W. E. B.

*Hera's Gift to
Biton and Cleobis*

*Immortality
Filial Devotion*

42

Job 14.14; I Cor. 15.53; 54; John 11.25; Ex. 20.12

The masterpiece of Polyclitus was the gold and ivory statue of Hera, the white-armed queen of heaven. Cydippe, an ancient priestess of the goddess, desired above all else to behold this famous statue, and since no oxen were at hand her two sons, Biton and Cleobis, testified their affection for their aged mother by yoking themselves to her chariot and pulling her many weary leagues through heat and dust to the temple at Argos where stood the justly celebrated work of art. The devoted priestess and her pious sons

were received with unbounded admiration and the priest officiating thought it meet that so reverent a worshipper should herself approach the goddess and ask, if she so desired, some favor at her hand.

“Slowly old Cydippe rose and cried,
‘Hera, whose priestess I have been and am,
Hear me! and grant for these, my pious sons,
Who saw my tears and wound their tender arms

Around me, and kissed me calm, and since
no steer

Stayed in the byre, dragged out the
chariot old,

And wore themselves the galling yoke, and
brought

Their mother to the feast of her desire,
Grant them, O Hera, thy best gift of gifts.’

Whereat the statue from its jeweled eyes
Lightened, and thunder ran from cloud to cloud

In heaven, and the vast company was hushed;
But when they sought for Cleobis, behold,

He lay there still, and by his brother’s side
Lay Biton, smiling through ambrosial curls,

And when the people touched them they
were dead.”

In this beautiful myth we discover what heaven deems her choicest gift for mortals. It is immortal life. This is, as Channing says, “the glorious discovery of Christianity,” and this

alone which, as Young has said, "the soul can comfort, elevate and fill." Better this than all the pomp and wealth and pleasure of this world and "the paths of glory" which "lead but to the grave."

W. E. B.

*The
Poisoned Princess*

Influence

43

Rom. 14.7; Acts 5.15; II Cor. 3.2; I Sam. 20.38, 39

In all that a man is or is not; in all that he does or does not; in the sum total of his own character, consciously or otherwise, his life is affecting other lives.

The story is told in mythology of a goddess who came unseen, but was always known by the blessings she left in her pathway. Trees blackened by forest fires put forth new leaves as she passed by, in her footprints at the brookside violets sprang up, the stagnant pool became a spring of sparkling water, the parched fields blossomed as the rose, and every hillside and valley blushed with new life and beauty. This is a beautiful prophecy which may be literally fulfilled in your life and mine today.

The story is also told of a beautiful Indian princess, sent as a present to a king. About her

was an atmosphere as sweet-smelling as the garments of Aphrodite. She seemed as beautiful and as pure as if "fresh from a bath of dew" and her breath was as sweet perfume of the richest rose. But strange enough, in the atmosphere that she carried about with her was the contagion of death. From her infancy this beautiful woman had known no food but poison. She had been reared upon it, and had become so permeated with it that she herself became the very essence of it. She would breath her fragrant breath into a swarm of insects and behold! they lie dead at her feet. She would place the loveliest flowers upon her bosom, and lo! they fade and fall away. Into her presence came a humming-bird; it fluttered, poised a moment, shuddered and fell in death.

And how like this poisoned princess is every man whose influence is a blight and curse upon his fellow-men. We live, and the atmosphere we exhale is richly laden with the fragrance of virtue, or with the poisonous perfumes that consume.

"You are writing a gospel,
A chapter each day,
By deeds that you do,
By words that you say;
Men read what you write,
Whether faultless or true;
Say! What is the gospel
According to you?"

W. E. B.

*Ulysses Plowing
Over His Child*

*Intemperance
Shirking Duty*

44

Prov. 20.1; Dan. 1.8; Matt. 23.23; Jud. 5.23

A story is told of Ulysses, king of Ithaca, whose adventures are related in Homer's story of the Odyssey. Ulysses did not wish to leave home to go to the Trojan war, so he pretended to be mad. A very shrewd neighbor said, "We can soon find out whether he is mad or not. He is plowing in the field yonder. We will put his little boy in the furrow in front of the plow. If he plows over him, then he is mad; if he turns aside, then he is only pretending." They acted upon this advice, but Ulysses would not drive over his little boy, so they found him out and he had to go to the war.

The intemperate man shows his moral madness by destroying his family, bringing his children to poverty, and doing all he can by example to ruin them forever. Very few, uninflamed with liquor, would do to their families what drinking men are doing every day.

*Scopas and
Simonides**Jealousy
Self-Preference*

45

Rom. 12.10; I Sam. 23.17; John 12.43; II Tim. 3.2

A noted Christian worker one time confessed to the writer that nothing made him more heartily ashamed of himself than his jealousy of another brother's success and his inability to thank God for it. This confession reminded me of the story of Scopas and Simonides. Simonides, one of the most prolific of early Grecian poets, passed much of his time at the courts of princes, and on one occasion was asked by Scopas, king of Thessaly, to prepare and recite a poem at a banquet in which the king's exploits would be fittingly celebrated. Simonides, to enrich his ode, introduced some of the exploits of Castor and Pollux, which thing very much displeased the young king. He was incapable of pleasure in any one's praise but his own, not even willing to share it with the immortal sons of Jupiter. He begrudged every line that did not rehearse his own praise and when Simonides approached to receive the promised reward Scopas gave him but one half the sum, saying as he did so, "Here is payment for my part of the poem; Castor and Pollux will doubtless compensate you for theirs."

I wonder if this is not a rarer grace than we at

first surmise it to be, this grace that enables one to note without jealousy the growing influence and power of another in the same sphere of service as one's own. I have always thanked God for Jonathan when he said to his friend David, "*Thou* shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next to *thee*." He seemed so glad to see David advanced. May the Holy Spirit help us to search ourselves just at this point, and let us not forget that the desire to be preferred rather than to be useful is the rock upon which many a soul has been wrecked.

W. E. B.

*Sisyphus and
Death*

*Judgment
Misfortune a Blessing*

46

Job 5.17; Ps. 119.67; Zech. 13.9; Heb. 12.11

Sisyphus, a famous character of Greek mythology, was shrewd and crafty above all others. His name really means the Wise One. He made a chair with strange automatic workings. When a creditor called upon him to collect a debt, Sisyphus invited him to sit down, and no sooner had the fellow taken his seat than a hundred ligaments of steel darted out and bound the fellow fast. He was kept there until he cancelled the debt, and then Sisyphus released him.

When Death came to fetch Sisyphus, he was offered this chair, and when he had sat down he found himself held in fetters. For years Death was nowhere at work in the world, and as a result, people grew careless and indifferent. Jupiter listened in vain for the prayers of men. Not a single voice from man arose, no prayer, no accusation, no complaint, as if, between the mortals and the gods, "Fate's golden chain had snapped."

It is sad, but it is true, that if you take away the judgments of God, people are prone to forget Him. Trouble and misfortune have turned many a one to righteousness, and death has caused thousands to think of God.

W. E. B.

*The Winged Feet
of Mercury*

*Ministry,
The Christian*

47

Isa. 52.7; Eph. 6.15; I Sam. 21.8; I Tim. 2.7

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel, and bring glad tidings of good things." On the pinnacle of the Masonic tower in Chicago there is fixed the figure of Mercury. His attitude is that of a swiftly speeding courier. I have always admired the graceful runner, making his way, as it were, through the skies above the noisy city. I knew he belonged to the literature

of mythology, but to the significance of his peculiar equipment I was a stranger. Among other things he has a pair of wings on each of his shoes. Mercury was the son of Jupiter, the supreme ruler of the universe. He was a most skillful and dexterous individual and Jupiter made him his chief messenger and cupbearer, and together with his other equipment he was given the wings for his heels by reason of which he could carry messages to any part of the universe with the speed of the lightning. Truly the king's business requires haste. But think of the equipment of him who carries the message of heaven's real and rightful Ruler panoplied with the "whole armour of God," and his "feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." And then think of the message! No fabled son of Jupiter was ever thus accoutered, nor ever had a message of such wonder to proclaim. I know of a young man who turned away from a handsome income to preach the Gospel, and this is what he gave as his reason: He said, "I would rather be a preacher and be put in trust with a message that transfigures and transforms as no other power, than to have prominence, and wealth and all that it brings." To think that one might preach a sermon and by so doing change the current of a human life that might mean indirectly the winning of a whole continent to Christ! And this is your privilege and mine if we keep faithfully the trust committed to us.

W. E. B.

*Ulysses and
His Bow**Miracles, The Cred-
entials of Christ
Consistent Life, A*

48

John 14.11; I Cor. 10.21; John 10.38; Matt. 5.16
John 3.2; Acts 2.22; Matt. 9.6; Matt. 11.21

When Ulysses returned with fond anticipations to his home in Ithaca his family did not recognize him. Even his wife denied her husband, so changed was he after an absence of twenty years and the hardships of a long protracted war. It was true of the vexed and astonished Greek, as of a nobler king, that he came to his own and his own received him not.

In this painful position he called for his bow, which he had left at home, when, embarking for the siege of Troy, he bade farewell to the orange groves and vine-clad hills of Ithaca. With characteristic sagacity he saw how a bow so stout and tough that none but himself could draw it, might be made to bear witness on his behalf. He seized it. To their surprise and joy it yielded to his arms; it bends till the bow string touches his ear. The wife, now sure that he is her long-lost husband, throws herself into his fond embrace, and his household confesses him the true Ulysses.

If I may compare small things with great, our Lord gave such proofs of His divinity when He

stood a stranger in His own home, despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He bent the stubborn bow of nature to His will, and proved Himself Creator by His mastery over creation.

Guthrie.

Note—This same illustration can be used with much force on the value of a consistent Christian life. There are, alas, too many whose actions belie their profession. It is not so much for us to **say** we are Christians as it is to **prove** it by the life we live. It was Venning who said, “In religion, not to do as thou sayest is to unsay thy religion in thy deeds, and to undo thyself by doing.”

W. E. B.

*Ulysses and
the Sirens*

Morality and Religion

49

Rom. 5.11; Rom. 15.13; Eph. 2.9; Isa. 64.6

When Ulysses sailed past the isle of the Sirens, who had the power of charming by their songs all who listened to them, he hears the sorcerous music on the shore; and, to prevent himself and his crew from landing, he filled their ears with wax, and bound himself to the mast with knotted thongs. Thus, according to the subtle Grecian story, he passed safely the fatal strand. But when Orpheus, in search of the Golden Fleece,

went by this island, he, being, as you remember, a great musician, set up better music than that of the Sirens, enchanted his crew with a melody superior to the alluring song of the sea-nymphs; and so, without needing to fill the Argonauts' ears with wax, or bind himself to the mast with knotted thongs, he passed the sorcerous shore, not only safely but with disdain.

The ancients, it is clear from this legend, understood the distinction between morality and religion. He who, sailing past the island of temptation, has enlightened selfishness enough not to land, although he rather wants to; he who, therefore, binds himself to the mast with knotted thongs and fills the ears of his crew with wax; he who does this without hearing a better music, is the man of mere morality. Heaven forbid that I should underrate the value of this form of cold prudence; for wax is not useless in giddy ears, and Aristotle says youth is a perpetual intoxication. Face to face with sirens, thongs are good, though songs are better.

“Sin hath long ears. Good is wax,
Wise at times the knotted thongs;
But the shrewd no watch relax,
Yet they use, like Orpheus, songs.
They no more the Sirens fear;
They a better music hear.”

Joseph Cook.

*Arion and the
Dolphin**Music,
The Power of*

50

I Sam. 16.16; Rev. 5.9; I Chron. 6.32; Luke 15.25

When Arion, far famed for his music, who had entered into a musical contest in Sicily, was returning homeward with the valuable prizes he had won, the seamen on the vessel conspired to take his life and possess themselves of his treasure. He asked as a last request that he might be allowed to die as became a bard, clothed in his minstrel garb and singing his death-song to the accompaniment of his harp. This was granted him. But as he sang and played, the music drew about the ship some dolphins, and when he sprang into the sea one of them received him upon its broad back and bore him safely to the land.

Of this legend, and the power of music, Spencer wrote:

“Then was heard a most celestial sound
 Of dainty music which did next ensue;
And, on the floating waters as enthroned,
 Arion with his harp unto him drew
The ears and hearts of all that goodly crew;
 Even when as yet the dolphin which him bore
Through the Aegean seas from pirate’s view,
 Stood still, by him astonished at his lore,
And all the raging seas for joy forgot to roar.”

George MacAdams.

*Ulysses and the
Cattle of the Sun**Obedience
Offerings, Tainted*

51

Ps. 51.16-19; Prov. 15.8; Isa. 1.11-18; I Sam. 15.22

You cannot please God by sacrificing to Him the fruits of sin. Evil is not to be counterbalanced with good. The former must be forsaken; the latter is our duty at all times.

Ulysses, upon his return from Troy, came to an island where the cattle of the Sun were pasturing. Circe had warned Ulysses and his companions that the flocks must not be violated, whatever their wants might be, and told them that destruction would surely fall upon them if they transgressed. Ulysses, upon landing, bound his companions by solemn oath not to touch one of the animals of the sacred herd. But when all their provisions were exhausted and famine pressed them, one day in the absence of Ulysses, they slew some of the cattle; and when the leader returned he found them attempting to atone for the deed by offering a portion of their plunder to the offended gods. But they sacrificed in vain, for no sooner had they embarked than a mighty storm shattered their vessel, and every one of the crew but Ulysses perished.

Obedience is better than sacrifice; but even so, the only sacrifice that God will not despise is that

of a heart, broken and contrite because of wrong, and neither money nor anything else tainted with sin can please God or avert his wrath.

W. E. B.

*Antigone's Devotion to
Her Father Oedipus*

*Parents, Honoring
Filial Devotion*

52

Ex. 20.12; Eph. 6.1; I Tim. 5.4; Matt. 10.21

In the annals of legendary Greece we come across the figure of Antigone as the shining example of filial fidelity. She was the devoted daughter of Oedipus, and Oedipus, you may recall, was the victim of a cruel and unrelenting fate. He had unknowingly killed his father and married his own mother, for which crime the city of Thebes, where Oedipus reigned as king, was smitten with pestilence and famine, and only when the oracle was consulted was the double crime of Oedipus made known to the people and to himself.

Oedipus was seized with madness, and tearing out his own eyes he wandered away from his kingdom, dreaded and abandoned by all except Antigone, his daughter, who alone shared his wanderings. He was a despised outcast, but while others heaped contumely upon him she honoured him and cared for him, risking even the

anger of the gods for his sake, until he found the termination of his wretched life. And then she sang, as we read in Sophocles:

“Oh, my dearest father,
Beneath the earth now in darkness hid,
Worn as thou wert with age, to me thou still
Wast dear, and to me shall ever be.”

I know some people who are getting along finely and the best they have ever done for their old father is to let him go to the poor house. Every wrinkle on your father's brow, every silver hair that lies smooth upon his tired head, the hollow cheek, the bent shoulder and the trembling hand, all speak a language no human being could mistake, and every one of them, son—every one of them, daughter, is a mark of which you should be justly proud.

W. E. B.

*Theseus Forgetting His
Father Aegeus*

*Parents, Neglect of
Old Age, Neglect of*

53

Ex. 20.12; Heb. 12.9; Isa. 46.4; Eph. 6.1

There is, perhaps, among the myths no sadder picture than that of the death of Aegeus, caused by the neglect of his son, Theseus. The young man had determined to deliver the kingdom of his father from the tribute of seven youths and seven

maidens to be paid each year to King Minos, and to be devoured by the Minotaur in the labyrinth. So he volunteered in spite of the entreaties of his father, to become one of the youths, hoping for an opportunity to slay the monster. The arrangement was made, however, with the father that if he was successful and was returning with his life, the black sails which the ship carried should be exchanged for white ones.

Theseus slew the Minotaur, and Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, became his wife and fled with him. But they were so selfishly intent upon their own happiness that they forgot the old man who every day sat on the cliffs above Athens, hoping to see the white ship in the offing, and they neglected to change the black sails for the white. And so, when he saw the black sails, the old man fell over the cliff into the sea.

Youth is too often careless of age, and so greatly intent upon its own pleasures that it forgets the ones who many times could cry with Hood:

“When he is forsaken,
Withered and shaken,
What can an old man do but die?”

Let us cultivate a care for those to whom the good God says, “And even to your old age, I am He; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you; even I will carry, and will deliver you.”

George MacAdams.

*Triptolemus Robbed
of Immortality**Parents, Over-
Indulgence of*

54

Prov. 13.24; Prov. 22.6; Gen. 18.19; I Tim. 3.4

The reason for many a young man's ruined life is often easy to understand. It is because of intended kindness but over-indulgence of thoughtless, easy-going parents. Have you heard the story of Ceres and Triptolemus? It was where now stands the city of Eleusis that Ceres, the goddess of the harvest, in disguise, was kindly entertained by the father and mother of Triptolemus, and in gratitude for their hospitality Ceres thought to bestow immortality upon the boy whom she had kissed back to health from a deadly fever. In the night the goddess arose, and taking the sleeping youth, she passed her hands over his limbs, uttered over him her solemn, potent charm, and laid him in the ashes. But the mother of Triptolemus, who had been secretly watching, sprang forward and snatched her child from the fire. Then Ceres dropped her disguise and all about them shone the divine splendor of the heavenly guest. And as they stood astonished the goddess said, "Mother, thou hast been cruel in thy fondness; for I would have made thy son immortal." Of course, the mother meant well, and the illustration is hardly fair. But so have millions of other mothers meant well, but by in-

terference, though well-intentioned, with the laws that make for holy character, they have lost for their child the life and the immortality which the glorious Christ brought to light. There is, of course, such a thing as "Children's Rights," but to think this means the right to do as they please is indeed a sad and a serious mistake. Allowing a child to learn by the things it suffers is a dangerous and wicked policy, and alas! for the many children who have been wronged and ruined and worsted in the struggle of life by the gratification of their every desire and indulgence of their every whim. What a responsibility is that of the parent!

W. E. B.

*Ceres and the
Dying Child*

*Parents, Over-Indulgence of
God's Way the Best*

55

Dan. 2.21-23; Rom. 11.33; Gen. 18.19; Prov. 22.6

When Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, was searching for her stolen daughter, she was entertained at a humble home where the only son, a small child, was near death's door. Ceres bent over him and kissed him back into the vigor of health. That night, when all were sleeping, the goddess arose, and lifting the child from his couch, ran her hands over his limbs. She mut-

tered over him three times a solemn charm, and then laid him upon the smouldering coals of the hearth.

But the goddess had been watched closely by the mother, who suddenly sprang forward and with a cry snatched her child from the fire. The goddess then made herself known, and her glory shone with dazzling brightness all about her as she said to the bewondered mother, "You have been cruel in your fondness for your son. I would have made him immortal, but you have frustrated my endeavor."

It is true that many a mother has come between God and His plan for the glory and usefulness of her child. The short-sightedness of over-indulgent parents has often been the ruin of their offspring.

It is a blind love indeed that forgets the stern discipline, which as some one has said, "is a little cruel that it may be very kind," and indulges every present wish of the heart at the cost of future happiness, honor and hope.

W. E. B.



*Arachne's Challenge
to Minerva*

*Patience, Long
Suffering of God
Sin, Wilful Presumptuous
Sin, Consequence of*

56

Jer. 12.5; Job 40.2; Acts 26.14; Isa. 45.9; Romans 2.4

The patience and forbearance of God is finely illustrated in the interesting story of Arachne and Minerva. It is the story of a mortal who dared to come into competition with the gods. Arachne had attained such skill in the art of weaving that the nymphs themselves would leave their groves and fountains to gaze upon her work. So beautiful was it to look upon, that one day it was suggested that she must have been taught of Minerva herself. So great was the maiden's pride, however, that she could not bear to be thought of as the pupil even of a goddess, and accordingly sent a challenge to Minerva bidding her to come and try her skill if she dared to venture.

Minerva was, of course, displeased but she came to Arachne in the form of an old woman and gave her friendly advice, saying, "Challenge your fellow mortals if you will, but do not compete with a goddess." Arachne stopped her spinning for a moment and in anger said, "I am not afraid of the goddess; let her come, and if beaten, I will pay the penalty!" Then Minerva dropped her

disguise, but Arachne was unterrified. Even then Minerva waited but there was no sign of penitence or reverence, and the contest began.

In the center of her web Minerva wrought in figures "that seemed to live, so like they were in sight" the scene of her conquest with Neptune, and in each of the four corners was represented an incident illustrating the displeasure of the gods at such presumptuous mortals as had dared to contend with them. These all Minerva meant in pity as a warning to her rival to give up the contest before it was too late. But Arachne, in her presumption and wilful impiety, filled her canvass with subjects designedly chosen to depict the failings and the faults of the gods, which, when Minerva saw them, made her indignant at the insult. She first tore Arachne's web to pieces, then touched her forehead and made her feel her guilt and shame, upon which Arachne went out and hanged herself. Minerva pitied her, touched her once again and transformed her into a spider forever hanging and spinning her thread out of her own body.

And isn't it true, as every sinner must admit, that the patience and long suffering of God have been marvelously manifest in trying to dissuade him from his wicked and wilful way which can only end in disaster to himself. In His Word He has written on every page His admonitions, His warnings, and the offers of His pardoning grace. In His providence He has sought in num-

berless ways to show us the way we should go; He has borne with us, and in "the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long suffering" He has not cut us off in order that happily His goodness might lead us to repentance. But so long as man persists in shutting his eyes to every warning light hung out along the way, and rushes pell-mell past every semaphore of God's grace, and spurns His every offer of mercy and help, what can he expect as the result of "his hardness and impenitent heart" but to "treasure up for himself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?"

W. E. B.

*Hector's Farewell
to Andromache*

*Patriotism
Duty, The Call of*

57

I Sam. 17.32; II Tim. 1.19; Matt. 10.37, 38; I Cor. 16.13

I like to see a man on the firing line when the battle is hottest. I mean when worthy issues are at stake. God forgive us cringing cowards, who for the sake of a few paltry pennies or other trifling gain, will skulk back and let the few brave souls lead on alone. What is perhaps the most delicate and pathetic passage in the Illiad of Homer is the farewell of Hector, the Trojan hero, to his wife Andromache and his son Astyanax.

It was just before Hector went forth to encounter the mighty Ajax with his massive shield and “far-shadowing spear.” Greece had proven herself no feeble enemy and Hector had, from the first, a presentiment of the doom awaiting his city. And though he himself was the principal stay and support of the throne he insisted on going forth to what he knew were certain heavy risks of battle with such illustrious warriors as Ajax, Agamemnon and Achilles. His aged parents, Priam and Hecuba, both besought him, but all in vain, while Andromache, even as she assisted him with his armor, said:

“In pity keep within the fortress here,
Nor make thy child an orphan and thy wife
a widow.”

Then answered Hector, great in war, “All this I bear in mind, dear wife; but I should stand Ashamed before the men and long-robed dames Of Troy, were I to keep aloof and shun The conflict, coward-like.’ ”

The world has been singing doxologies of praise to Hector ever since. God give us men like that in our communities today; men, who, when moral issues are at stake, become the fearless champions of their own conviction. And God save us from the small souls who, under similar circumstances, and for the unworthy reasons mentioned, will neither lead nor follow those who do, but hide

from duty's call behind that "coward's whine;
that liar's lie," "A man must live."

"But is it so? Pray tell me why
Life at such cost you have to buy?
In what religion were you told
'A man must live?'
The Saviour did not live!
He died!"

W. E. B.

*Apollo and
Daphne*

*Pleasures of
World Disappointing*

58

Eccles. 2.1-3; Job 20.12-16; Titus 3.3; Prov. 21.27

Things are not always as they seem. One's whole soul may be wrapped up in the excitements of this world. You may get enjoyment there and dream of the satisfaction you think supreme in the pleasures of tomorrow, but some day these same pleasures will be to you as apples of Sodom, full of ashes and bitterness, and you will then know something of what your hurry for them has cost you in the loss of better things.

The story is told that Cupid, angered by an insult from Apollo, shot an arrow into the heart of this god that fired him with an uncontrollable passion for Daphne, a beautiful nymph whose de-

lights were in the sports of the woodland and the chase. Cupid had also, by an arrow of lead, poisoned the heart of Daphne with a fatal dislike for Apollo. Apollo loved her and longed for her. He had never seen any to be compared with this beautiful maiden with her eyes bright like the stars, her hair flung loose over her shoulders, and her arms and breast bared to the kisses of the breezes. He followed her, but she fled like the wind; he called to her but she would not stay. He said, "I am the god of medicine, and know the virtue of all healing plants, but I suffer myself from a malady that no balm can cure; it is for love that I pursue you." But she fled the faster. Apollo, vexed that she should spurn his offer, determined all the more to gain his prize. He threw himself into the race, and was soon quite near. He was sure that this sweet soul was to be all his own, but just as he threw his arms about her a strange thing took place. She called upon her father, Peneus, the river god, to change her form. Scarcely had she spoken when a stiffness overspread her body, her limbs were rooted to the earth, her breast was enclosed in bark, her arms turned to branches, and her flowing hair became the leaves of a tree.

It is just so in the mad chase for the vain things of this world. They are visions that fade and bubbles that burst upon touch. Poor indeed the man who has sought them at the sacrifice of life's nobler attainments.

W. E. B.

*Hercules Equipped
By the Gods**Power, Need
of Divine*

59

Acts 1.8; Eph. 6.13-17; Eph. 3.16; Zech. 4.6

"Not by might nor by power, but by My spirit," saith the Lord. Without the help of heaven, what can the Christian hope to accomplish? In fact, Jesus said, "Without Me ye can do nothing."

Hercules, because of the enmity of Juno, was rendered subject to his cousin Eurystheus, who imposed upon the prodigious youth all sorts of desperate and delicate adventures. Twelve things he was commanded to do, which are known as the twelve labors of Hercules. Among these was the slaying of a lion, the slaughter of the Hydra, the securing of the golden apples of Hesperides, the bringing of Cerberus from the lower world, and other feats of like wonder.

Hercules was a mighty man, but of himself would doubtless have failed. The gods, however, were favorable to him, and equipped him for his strenuous labors. Zeus gave him a powerful shield. Hermes gave him a magic sword. Apollo lent him his bow and arrow. Poseidon gave him a horse, and Vulcan a golden armour for his body.

How much we need some other power than our own. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, and there are victories to be won too hard for us; but if we are weak, we might be strong. Our God is better than the gods of mythology. His promise is, "Ye shall receive power," and if we have failed, our very failures ought to drive us to Him, for infinitely better than all the gifts the Olympian gods could bestow is the power that comes from the touch of His spirit.

W. E. B.

*Hercules Drawing His
Bow Upon the Sun*

*Prayer,
Importunity in*

60

Luke 18.1; Luke 11.8; Matt. 11.12; Gen. 18.23-33

There is such a thing as "taking heaven by storm." God honors a heroic faith, a faith that will not be denied. It is told us in one of the legends concerning Hercules that he one time drew his bow upon Apollo. Apollo, you may recall, was the god of the sun. The circumstance surrounding this bold and seeming rash adventure was occasioned by the oppressive heat of the sun that beat down upon the head of this daring hero while he was being detained upon the ocean shores for the lack of means to sail the seas. So oppressively hot did the sun's rays become that

Hercules made emphatic his demand for moderation by drawing his mighty bow upon the sun-god. The intrepid courage of the hero won for him the admiration and good-pleasure of Apollo, who both honored his request and furnished him with the necessary equipment for the voyage he wanted to make. What other lesson is this than that which Jesus taught, namely, that heaven itself gives way to the saint who thunders at its door his righteous will. If an ungenerous, selfish, heartless neighbor, for whom a little fleshly repose outweighs a friend's dire distress, could be induced to grant a sorely needed favor by sheer persistence that would not brook denial; if a defenseless widow's persistent appeal can wring from a hard hearted, unscrupulous judge her heart's desire, how much more will our petitions, if likewise faithful, secure the thing we ask from God, who in character is the very opposite of the indifferent neighbor and the godless judge. If I must storm at heaven's door, "as if His mercy were clean gone forever," the plain teaching of the parables of importunity is that the difficulty is not with God but with myself.

*Semele in the
Presence of Jove**Prayers, Rash*

61

Jas. 4.3; Mal. 1.7-9; Luke 18.11; Matt. 6.8

Juno was deeply angered with Semele, the mother of Bacchus, and seeking her destruction, she persuaded her to ask of Jove to grant her a favor and then request that he show her his glory. Semele, who was in great favor with the "father of gods," plead with him that he grant her whatever she should ask and he yielded. Then she made known her desire that he should come before her arrayed in all his splendors such as he wore in heaven. Jove endeavored to stop her as she spake, but she was too quick for him and he could not retract his promise nor deny her request. So he clothed himself in his splendors, not putting on all, as he did when he overthrew the giants, but what was known as his lesser panoply, and thus he came before the rash woman. Her mortal frame could not endure the immortal radiance and she was consumed to ashes. Mrs. Browning says:

"God answers sharp and sudden on some
prayers,

And thrusts the thing we have prayed for
in our face,
A gauntlet with a gift in't. Every wish
Is like a prayer—with God."

George MacAdams.

*Hercules Wrestling
With Antaeus*

*Prayer, Strength in
Spiritual Strength
Power, Connection
With Broken*

62

Isa. 40.29-31; Gen. 32.24-28; Ps. 121.2; Eph. 6.10

In the old classic story, Hercules, the giant, sent out a challenge to wrestle with any man the world could send against him. The challenge was placarded in all the cities of Greece, and at last the gauntlet thrown down by the mighty Hercules was taken up, not by a man of stature like himself, but by a most unlikely sort of opponent, a man of dwarf-like stature whose name was Antaeus. As Goliath sneered at David, so Hercules contemptuously disdained this man of feeble build, but Antaeus demanded a trial of strength, and the day for the contest was set. The great crowd gathered, and Antaeus was there to meet his fierce antagonist. Hercules advances into the arena and exerts himself a bit, but the

little man stands his ground. The giant goes at him with greater strength, and then with greater, and then with every muscle at full tension, the sweat running from every pore, he wrestles on, but Antaeus does not go down. The great crowd laughs and jeers, and Hercules, beaten and humiliated, slinks way to his tent.

That night there came to the tent of Hercules a false friend of the strange wrestler, and whispered, "Gold! Gold! give me gold and I will tell you the secret of your defeat today, and how you may win tomorrow."

The gold is given, and the traitor says, "Your antagonist is Antaeus, the son of Earth. As long as his feet touch the earth he cannot be thrown, for all the strength of the earth passes into him. Sever that connection, and the victory is yours." Next day the crowds assemble again to witness once more the defeat of Hercules. Antaeus comes, little dreaming that his secret is known. Hercules advances, and before the dwarf is aware, by a sudden turn lifts him from his feet and crushes him in mid air.

The Lord God is our strength. Why do we do ourselves and Him this great wrong of being weak when we might be strong? If we are going down in defeat it is because we have broken connection with the source of power. A little neglect of prayer, and a little neglect of this and the

other means of grace and the victory is easy for the great enemy of your soul. But in close touch with God you are invincible.

W. E. B.

*Aeolus Loosing
the Winds*

Providence

63

Heb. 12.11; Isa. 40.12; Rom. 8.28; Acts 5.28

Aeolus was by the gods given command of the winds. He locked them in tremendous caves, holding them behind massive doors of brass, letting now a tempest loose upon the sea, and again calling it in and allowing a gentle zephyr to steal forth. Thus Virgil describes the visit to Aeolus of the jealous Juno, wife of Jupiter, and her prayer that he should loose a tempest upon the luckless Aeneas, and his reply; “ ‘Tis thy task, O queen, to consider what you would have done; on me it is incumbent to execute your commands.” Thus having said, whirling the point of his spear, he struck the hollow mountain’s side, and the winds, as in a formed battalion, rushed forth at every vent and scoured over the lands in a hurricane. In an instant clouds snatch the heavens and day from the eyes of the Trojans; sable night sits brooding upon the sea, thunder roars from pole to pole, the sky glares with repeated flashes,

and all nature threatens them with immediate death.

But we believe in One whose hand is not moved by petty malice or human passion. Who hath the storms of adversity in the hollow of His hand, while the tempests of trouble are pent up behind His omnipotent will. Who is moved only by the infinite compassion of His own heart, and who allows these storms to touch us, only that they may "drive us nearer home." So we hail Zephyrus as she, with gentle breath, wafts our bark onward, but should Eurocledon be loosed upon our sea we know that One hath us in His vision Who hath subjected every changing breeze to our highest good.

George MacAdams.

*Aeson Made
Young*

*Regeneration,
New Birth*

64

II Cor. 5.17; Isa. 40.31; John 3.7; Titus 3.5

Medea, the enchantress, so the story goes, sometimes used her art for a good purpose. Aeson, the father of her husband, was prevented by age and infirmity from being present at the celebration over the recovery of the Golden Fleece.

Calling her one day, her husband said, "Wife,

will you not take some of my years and add them to my father's?" and she replied that she would lengthen his father's life without abridging his own.

She then addressed her incantations to the stars and the moon, and to the gods and goddesses of the upper and lower worlds, and forthwith she prepared a huge caldron of the strangest mixtures. Into it went magic herbs, the wing of an owl, the liver of a stag, and a host of other weird ingredients. When all was ready and the caldron boiling, she opened the throat of the old man and let out all his blood. Then into his mouth she poured the juices of her caldron and immediately the gray hairs of Aeson became black, the pallor left his cheeks and the bloom of youth came back, while through his veins flowed new blood of life and vigor, and Aeson remembered himself as the youth of forty years before.

Aeson received a new life that made him young again, but how vastly better than Aeson's is the new life of the child of God. When he is born again he is young indeed, not in years, though an eternity of them has become his, but in soul and spirit. Aeson became such as he was in his youthful days forty years before, but the Christian puts off the old man and puts on the new in a far higher sense. He becomes a partaker of a new nature, and better than living forty years again with the old spirit and the old disposition,

he lives on forever with a new spirit and a new disposition, with “old things passed away and all things become new.”

W. E. B.

*Agdistis Secures
Immortality for Attis*

*Resurrection of
Christ*

65

I Cor. 15.54; Ps. 16.10; I Cor. 15.12; John 20.9

Attis, the son of the Phrygian goddess Cybele, was unwelcomed and hated by his mother. She exposed him to death in the forest, but he was reared by some shepherds and grew to such marvelous beauty that the nymph Agdistis greatly loved him. But still pursued by the hatred of his mother, he became insane and slew himself. Agdistis claimed his body and prayed Zeus that he might be spared the corruption of the grave. The prayer was granted. And, in celebration of the event, every year a festival of several days was held by the Phrygians in the early spring, at which the ceremony of laying his body away was observed, followed by the wildest transports of grief. But after three days he was supposed to be found again, and a feast of great joy was celebrated. There is here a marvelous analogy to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, of whom it was said, “Thou wilt not suffer Thy Holy

One to see corruption," and whose coming forth from the grave at the end of three days should throw all humanity into transports of joy as they celebrate their Easter festival. But also concerning those dear ones "whom we have loved long since and lost awhile" this illustration brings the glad thought that the power of the grave over them is broken and we remember the triumphant shout of Paul, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory!"

George MacAdams.

*Bacchus Giving Aid
to Zeus*

*Reward,
The Great*

66

Luke 12.32; II Tim. 4.8; II Tim. 2.12; Rev. 2.10

Bacchus has a surname, Euius, which was given to him by Zeus for the aid he rendered when the former was fighting to keep the giants out of Olympus. It means, "Well done, son," and was the cry of Zeus when he witnessed the valor of Bacchus, and was given him as the supreme reward for his good conduct. And, after all, what better reward is there for the toil and endeavor of life than the attestation of God and the assurance of our own heart that we have "well done." No gift of things, no mere emolument, no wages ever paid can completely reward a true man; these are

only incidental to the effort which one puts forth to win the approval of God and conscience. There cometh a time when the wreath shall fade, the wages will be all squandered, the gold rusted and useless, and when the richest reward Omnipotence can hand us, and love can bestow, is, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

George MacAdams.

Baucis and Philemon Reward and Retribution
Entertaining Gods Spiritual Harvest

67

Gal. 6.7; Rom. 2.6; II Cor. 9.6; Gen. 1.11

The law of the spiritual harvest and righteous retribution has fascinated the minds of all great poets, dramatists and writers of fiction. The story of Baucis and Philemon has been called a story for children, but it is vastly more, this legend that holds so prominent a place among the myths of Greece. One day two travelers entered a village seeking rest and shelter, but as they approached each housewife slammed the door, the village boys hooted and the dogs barked at their heels. But at last one small thatched cottage received them. It was the humble dwelling of Baucis and Philemon, a pious pair who had grown old together. Apologizing for the rudeness of

their neighbors they both began to prepare for their guests the best their humble mansion could afford — some herbs boiled with bacon, some olives, a bit of cheese and eggs lightly cooked in the ashes. Some wine, not of the oldest, was added; and for dessert, apples and wild honey; and over and above all, friendly faces, and simple but hearty welcome.

But as the simple meal proceeded the old folks were astonished to find that the wine as fast as it was poured out renewed itself of its own accord, and looking into the pitcher Baucis discovered that in its bottom was a fountain from which wine poured forth so long as it was needed. The lowly pair then recognized their heavenly guests who were none other than Jupiter in human shape and Mercury without his wings. They fell upon their faces and implored forgiveness for their simple entertainment. But Jupiter said, "We are gods. This inhospitable village shall pay the penalty of its impiety; you alone shall go free from the chastisement," and even as he spake they looked out and saw all the country 'round about sink into a lake, only their own house left standing and it changed into a beautiful palace of which the old couple were made the priest and guardian with a promise that they should live and die together.

And thus would the writer of ancient times teach us that men reap as they sow. It is no ar-

bitrary imposition, but a natural law that makes sin its own avenger. There is an oriental poem that runs like this:

“Aye, when thou hast drained a swallow’s milk,
Seen rocks bear olive nuts, the sand pomegranates yield;
A harder task to try thy vaunted skill remains;
To shield a wicked man from retribution’s pains.”

It is a lesson of experience that every word and every deed is a seed and contains within itself the germ of its own reward or retribution, and in the working of this law God is never mocked. You might as well endeavor to deceive God by painting a few pebbles and planting them for peach seeds, expecting first the sprout and then the tree and then the lucious fruit as to live a painted life expecting God to mistake sin for holiness and reward you with the blessing of the righteous.

W. E. B.

*Pythagoras and His
“Ipse Dixit”**Scriptures,
Authority of*

68

II Tim. 3.16; Heb. 4.12; John 7.46; Matt. 7.29

We have been told to love God with all the mind as well as with all the heart and soul. What is unreasonable, God would never ask you to believe, and because some of God's thoughts transcend human reason is no reasonable ground for doubt.

Pythagoras was a philosopher of some 500 years B. C., around whose character the imagination of the ancients has thrown much that is legendary and mythical. He gathered about him a great number of disciples who were to aid each other in the pursuit of wisdom. They had only to listen to what Pythagoras said. His authority was sufficient whether the disciples understood or not. Indeed, a question could be asked only by those who were advanced pupils, after years of patient submission. The “Ipse Dixit” of Pythagoras, “He said so,” settled all questions that might be in the mind, and when Pythagoras had spoken, it was enough without any proof.

This must be the ultimate attitude of every sincere Christian toward the Word of God. Past history ought to prove to us that of all attitudes,

this is the wisest. In 1860 eighty scientific theories, each one opposed to the Bible, were on record in the French Institute, but there is not a scientist today who will lend his name to a single one of them. What a great testimony!

W. E. B.

*Cadmus Sowing
Dragon's Teeth*

*Science Upholding the Bible
Civil Strife, The Folly of*

69

Ps. 19.1; Rom. 12.5; Ps. 119.89; Rom. 12.18

In the old Greek legend of the founding of Thebes, Cadmus, the grandson of Neptune, had to kill the dragon which guarded the site. Scarcely had he done so when Minerva, his protecting deity, commanded him to take the dragon's teeth and sow them in the earth. This had no sooner been done than the clods began to move, the points of spears to appear above the surface and in a short time he stood in the presence of a harvest of armed warriors, for each tooth from the triple rows in the dragon's head sprang up an armed giant. Cadmus prepared himself for another fierce encounter, but one of warriors said to him, "Meddle not with our civil war," whereupon they fell to fighting among themselves, and all were slain but one mighty giant, and this one Cadmus enlisted as a helper in building the city.

And so are the sciences lending themselves today toward the building of the great temple of Christianity. Many have been the theories of geology, and unbelieving men have urged them against the Bible. But theory has slain theory until today we have the new geology which is one of the best friends and strongest supporters of the Word of God. The same thing has been true of biology, and of astronomy. And it is true of archaeology; the buried cities of the past, the mummies of Egypt, and the stone libraries of Assyria are all contributing to the building of the world's one most glorious structure, the temple of the Christian religion.

Selected.

*Penelope Waiting
for Ulysses*

*Second Coming
of Christ*

70

John 14.3; II Tim. 4.8; I John 3.3; Eph. 5.27

In all the literature of ancient mythology there is not to be found a finer example of constance, fidelity and kindred virtues than that of Penelope to her long absent but never forgotten Ulysses. Embarking with other heroes of his day Ulysses had sailed away to the siege of Troy, upon the fall of which he began that eventful voy-

age which brought him at length, after an absence of twenty years, to Ithaca, his native land. His wife, Penelope, was a beautiful woman and during the absence of Ulysses more than a hundred nobles had been suing for her hand. But hers was a beauty not of form alone but of character and soul as well. She knew it was highly improbable that her lord would never return. For more than ten years her many important suitors had pressed their attentions and there seemed no refuge but in choosing one of them. She accordingly told them that when she had finished with a certain web she was weaving she would make her choice. She worked on the web every day but during the night would undo what she had wrought during the daytime, and thus she found delay. Ulysses entered the palace disguised as a beggar and found the suitors all assembled and in a trial of strength he proved himself the worthiest of the lot. Penelope, still unaware of the presence of Ulysses, had provided for the contest his own bow which she knew no other man could bend, and so in one act Ulysses revealed himself to his faithful spouse and took revenge upon the insolent suitors who had so annoyed her.

And why should not the church, which is the bride of Christ, thus wait for her absent Lord? Penelope was not sure Ulysses would ever return, but still she waited, even against hope, and kept herself pure for the sake of the one to whom she

had given her love and sworn fidelity. The Christian, however, is not thus left in doubt. His absent Lord, on going away, said, "And if I go away I will come again," and the child of God knows that some day He is coming back. Suppose that Penelope, the bride of Ulysses, sure of his return, had given herself to another! And yet nothing other than this is what some of us are doing who are playing harlot with the world. How could you, my brother, do an unclean thing if you knew that at that moment, or quite soon, Jesus Christ might come? "And every man that hath this hope in him," says John, "purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

W. E. B.

*Orpheus and
the Sirens*

*Sin, Its Allurement
Temptation, Overcoming
Christ Satisfying the Heart
New Affection,
Expulsive Power of*

71

Eph. 6.11; Rev. 3.10; Col. 1.27; Phil. 3.8

You have doubtless heard of the island of the Sirens, where the Sirens sang so sweetly that all who passed in ships were charmed with their music, lost control of themselves, and the ship

and the vessels were dashed to pieces on the rocks. When Ulysses came near with his vessel he put wax in the ears of his sailors, and then had them bind him to the masts, and although he struggled to be free no one would release him as the sirens sang.

This is one way to overcome the evil influence of the fascination of the so-called popular amusements of the day. Just make hard and fast rules, and if people break them, turn them out of the church. This would be an unchristly action, and who has given us authority to do it?

I am sure this is not the best solution of the problem. Another vessel came near—the sirens sang their sweetest music, and the sailors never turned their heads to listen—they really didn't know they were near the island, and all because they had Orpheus on board, and he sang a sweeter song than the sirens ever knew.

You may tell me all you will about the pleasure of questionable amusements. I ask you in reply, "Have you ever heard Orpheus sing?" Have you ever really felt the joy of being Christ's own follower? If not, then yield to Him today.

J. Wilbur Chapman.

*Cacus Stealing the
Cattle of Geryon**Sin Discovered
Watchfulness, Neglect of*

72

Num. 32.23; Eccles. 12.14; Luke 12.2; Matt. 10.26

Geryon was a monster who dwelt on one of the western isles. In his possession was a herd of bright magnificent oxen. One of the labors imposed upon Hercules was the bringing of these oxen to his cousin Eurystheus. While driving home the oxen, he had to pass one of the seven hills of Rome, in a cave of which dwelt Cacus, a huge giant. Overcome by fatigue, Hercules slept, and while the hero was sleeping, Cacus stole part of the cattle.

He pulled them backward by their tails to his cave so that their footprints might not show where they had been driven. It seemed as though they had gone in the opposite direction. Hercules was completely deceived. But when he drove the remainder of the herd past the cave where the stolen ones were concealed, those within commenced to low, and by the lowing of the cattle the thief was discovered. It was but the work of a moment to kill the giant and recover what he had lost.

Sin will make itself known; if not in one way, then in another, and it will bring you into judgment. You are not sure the sun will rise to-

row; it probably will, but you are not sure it will. There are other things of which you are not sure, but God did not make a mistake when He said, "Be sure your sin will find you out." It will find you out in the remorse of an accusing conscience. It puts its telltale marks upon the face, and finds you out in the way of natural consequences. It will find you out in your offspring, and if you escape any of its harvest here you may be sure you will reap it all hereafter.

It does not pay to sin.

W. E. B.

*Baldur and the
Mistletoe*

*Sins, Little
Little Things*

73

Matt. 13.32; James 2.10; Sol. 2.15; James 3.5

Baldur, one of the gods of northern mythology, was the son of Odin and Frigga. He had been vexed with strange dreams indicating to him that his life was in danger. He told his troubles to the assembled gods, with whom he was a favorite because of his fine disposition. In fact, he was called Baldur the Good. The gods resolved to exact an oath from all things to guard him against his danger. His mother, the goddess Frigga, straightway put all things under oath, fire and water, iron and all the metals, stones, trees,

beasts, creeping things and winged creatures, poison and disease, that none of them would injure Baldur. He was then considered immortal, and it was considered as a mark of honor to Balduer that the other gods amused themselves by hurling stones and darts and battle axes, because they knew his life was charmed. None of these dangerous weapons nor anything else that they could hurl against him could do him any harm; but at length Loki, the god of evil, came to the scene and was sorely vexed. He gathered a twig of mistletoe and threw it at Baldur, and to the utter amazement of all the other gods, it pierced him to the heart and felled him lifeless to the earth.

Loki had discovered the power of the mistletoe in this way. He was conversing with the mother of Baldur about the invulnerable life of her son, and she told him of the oath that had been exacted of all things to spare Baldur. "All things," she said, "except one little shrub that grows on the eastern side of Valhalla, and is called Mistletoe, and which I thought too young and feeble to do him any injury."

Just so do men fall under the power of sin. They resist the grosser immoralities, but fall at some point where they least expect it. It may be only a small thing, but sin is poison, and a little of it kills. A scratch from the poison-pointed sword of Laertes dispatched its victims as effect-

ually as all the daggers that stabbed Caesar in the senate house at Rome.

W. E. B.

*Hercules and
the Hydra*

*Sin, Immortality of
The Principle of,
Sanctification*

74

Hos. 8.7; Rom. 8.2; Rom. 7.1; I Sam. 15.33

If you expect to affect the vitality of sin, you must deal with its root.

The Hydra was a huge nine-headed monster that dwelt in a swamp and ravaged the country of Argos. Hercules undertook to slay him. He struck off one head after another, but as soon as one was knocked off, two new ones quickly grew forth in its place. The middle head was immortal, and until this was taken off the cutting away of the others was futile. At last, with the help of his servant, he succeeded in burning away the heads, and the immortal one he hid beneath a huge stone.

Dealing with one sin at a time will hardly do, for when we think we have conquered one and turn our attention to another, the first puts on new strength and marks the point of another defeat.

There is a law of sin and death within, vital, vigorous and immortal we might say, and responsible for all the evil of your life and mine. It is here that the decisive blow must be struck, and not until the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death, can we hope for the soul's security from the ravages of this dread monster.

W. E. B.

*Hercules and Achelous
Contending for Dejanira*

*Sin, Nature of,
Power of, Bondage
of, Persistency of*

75

Eph. 5.11; Amos 5.12; Heb. 3.13; Eph. 6.12

In ancient Greece among the fairest of maidens was one called Dejanira whom a host of suitors strove to win. Among the suitors were Hercules and Achelous, to whom the rest gave way, and these two mighty gods came to battle over her. Achelous, the river god, discovered that he was no match for the powerful son of Jove, and found himself, after a terrific struggle, on his face with his mouth in the dust and his throat in the grip of Hercules' mighty hand.

But Achelous was possessed of a strange power to transform himself at will either into a hissing serpent or a raging bull. First he curled his body

into a coil and hissed with his forked tongue in Hercules' face. But Hercules had strangled snakes in his infancy and soon was choking the very life from his rival's body. Vanquished in this form, Achelous turned himself into a bull, but Hercules rushed upon him, threw him upon the sand, wrenched one of his horns from his angry head, and compelled him to acknowledge his mighty foe his conqueror.

That bull is a man's besetting sin in the sense that it is the ultimate form it assumes to cause a saint to fall. The devil is a past-master in metamorphosis. The essence of evil is ever the same, but its form is as varied as the passions of men. You conquer it in one form and it appears in another. But there are those who have victory at practically every point but one, and here is where the death-struggle must take place. But, thank God, there is divine strength of a mightier sort than Hercules ever knew, and even the bull can be thrown and throttled and overcome. It is not necessary to sin, and after all he is the mightiest hero who alone on his knees with God, with no applauding hands to cheer him on, meets his foe and remorselessly rides it down.

*The Poisoned Robe
of Hercules**Sin, Overcoming
Sin, Wages of*

76

Heb. 12.1; Rom. 8.2; Rom. 7.2; Rom. 7.23

“Wherefore,” says the writer of Hebrews, “let us lay aside the sin that so easily besets us.” But this is never an easy thing to do. That sin is like the poisoned robe that Dejanira sent to Hercules. Nessus, the Centaur, had attempted to steal Dejanira, the wife of Hercules, away from him, whereupon an arrow from the bow of Hercules pierced his heart. Dejanira, at the request of the dying Centaur, took a portion of his blood which she was informed could be used as a charm to preserve her husband’s love. She later became jealous of Iole, a captive maiden, and steeping a robe in the blood of Nessus she gave it to Hercules by the hand of Lichas. Hercules put it on and as soon as it became warm the poison entered his flesh. In his frenzy he seized the man who had brought it to him and threw him into the sea. He then tried to tear the fatal garment off, but it stuck to his flesh and tore away huge pieces from his body, and strong man that he was he had to die. Where is the man who has known nothing of the law in his members warring against the law that makes for righteousness, that law which assails us at our weakest point, and when we

would do good, comes with all its desperate and deadly temptation and sweeps us away in the fierce storm of our unrestrained passion. Many a man strong in a hundred other ways, loses thus the one decisive battle that would have redeemed his whole life. But there is victory. Hercules had to die, but, "O, wretched man that I am," says Paul, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

W. E. B.

*Menzentius, the Cruel-
Hearted*

*Sin, The
Repulsiveness of*

77

Rom. 7.24; Isa. 1.6; Rom. 7.13; Rom. 7.8

Aneas, having safely arrived upon the shores of Hesperia, was directed in a dream as he lay sleeping on the bank of the river Tiber, to ascend the stream in search of allies for the pending battle with the Latins. He came to the place where Evander, the aged, exiled king of the Arcadians, dwelt, and by him was told of the Etruscans, a rich and mighty people who held the country beyond the river, and in whom Aneas would find his most powerful ally. The king of these Etruscans, Mezentius by name, had been driven out by his own people because of his detestible cruelty.

Mezentius was a stranger to mercy, and no torture which his cruel heart could invent was too horrible to gratify his vengeance. One of his methods of punishment was to fasten the living to the dead, hand to hand, face to face and lip to lip, and thus leave the wretched victim to die in this terrible and disgusting embrace. Virgil gives an interesting account of this horrible practice in his Aneid, and by many it is thought that here Paul got his figure of speech when he cried, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Whether this be so or not, what a striking illustration it is of the thing Paul had in mind. He was crying for deliverance from sin, from the impure and unholy passions and appetites which use this body with its weakness and its lust as the instrument of their activity and so bring us under the power of death. And what a picture it is of the real nature of sin, foul, offensive and polluting. It may not appear so at first to the sinner who loves his sin, but to the one who has found the way and experienced the delights of a holy life in Christ the cry of Paul comes with telling significance. And if sin can thus appear to a mortal like Paul and like you and me, how must it appear in the eyes of Him in whose sight the very heavens are unclean and whose angels He has charged with folly!

*King Midas and His
Asses Ears**Sin, Secret*

78

Prov. 28.13; Ps. 19.12; Rom. 2.16; Num. 32.23

One day, unless forgiven of God, the thing done in darkness and held in secret will be made manifest for nothing is hid that shall not be revealed.

One of the most amusing of the myths is the story of how King Midas got his asses ears. Pan, the god of the fields, had the temerity to compare his music with that of Apollo and to challenge the god of the lyre to a trial of skill. Pan blew on his pipes and with his rustic music greatly pleased himself and his faithful follower, King Midas, who happened to be present. Then Apollo struck the strings of his lyre with such ravishing harmony that at once Tmolus, the judge, awarded him the victory. The decision pleased all present but King Midas who questioned the justice of the award. Apollo felt the insult keenly and declared that such a depraved pair of ears should no longer remain in human form, and so he caused the ears of King Midas to grow hairy and become in length and shape like those of an ass. King Midas attempted to hide his misfortune with a heavy growth of hair, and so far succeeded that no one knew of his deformity but his barber whom he bound to silence by great promises and by

threats of dire punishment. The barber, however, found it too much to keep such a secret, so he dug a small hole in the ground, whispered the story into the earth and covered it up. Then up from the spot there grew a thick bed of hollow reeds and with every breeze that blew they whispered the words, "King Midas has asses ears."

How often our spiritual deformity is hidden from the eyes of the world. As a rule the world esteems us better than we know ourselves to be. But there is a day of revelation when the secrets of men shall be judged, as Paul says, "By Jesus Christ according to my Gospel," when the sinner shall stand forth stripped of every disguise. "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper." But, "Blessed is the man whose sin is covered"—covered by the merciful provision of God. Better ten million times ten million let God cover your sin in His way than to indulge in the vain attempt to cover it in your own way.

W. E. B.

*Achilles and His
Invulnerable Armor*

*Sins, Secret,
Little*

79

Psa. 19.12-14; Eccles. 12.14; Heb. 4-12-14; Sol. 2.15

Achilles was said to have an invulnerable armor, but it was not invulnerable. When he was

but a little child his mother, being warned by the oracle, took him to the river Styx, and holding the little fellow by the heel, plunged him beneath the water. Every part of the body except the heel by which his mother held him was by this immersion made invulnerable. He went into the Trojan war and became a great hero. He plunged into the midst of battle, and while all about him fell the wounded and the dead, no weapon had any effect upon his charmed life. But Paris, who was his inveterate enemy, having learned through the oracle of the uncharmed spot, shot him in the heel with a poisoned arrow and killed him.

Every Christian ought to put on the whole armor of God. If there's a weak spot in your life that's the place where you will always meet defeat. The devil knows your vulnerable point, and this, of course, is always his point of attack. It was only a small place of defect in Achilles' armor, but it was enough to cause his ruin, and so in your sight it may be but a small sin that is in your heart and life, but it is large enough, you may be sure, to ruin your soul, just as the smallest leak will sink the proudest vessel, and the smallest neglected disease will bring down to the grave.

W. E. B.

80

Rom. 2.16; Rev. 3.17; Col. 3.2; Matt. 6.19

Among the distinguished architects celebrated in ancient Greek mythology were the two brothers Trophonius and Agamedes. They were employed by King Hyrieus to build for him a treasury house. But as they built they were possessed of a passion for the wealth they knew the treasury would contain, and in the wall of the building they placed a stone in such a manner that it could be removed and then again put back in place. So adroitly and with such rare skill was the thing accomplished that none could detect the secret stone and by this means from time to time Trophonius and Agamedes purloined the treasure of the king. King Hyrieus was amazed for though his locks and his seals were untouched his wealth was continually diminished.

How like this it is with the life of many a child of God; a life well-guarded and victorious at every other point, but there is one place at which its spiritual vitality is tapped and where its treasury of divine glory, of virtue, and of spiritual worth in general is being drained and wasted. Strong and invulnerable at every other point, yet

here disheartening defeat is continually met. But there is one great difference. King Hyrieus did not know the source of his embarrassment and the loss that came to him. But in your life and mine such is not the case. The evil thing that saps our strength, robs us of our glory and our joy and threatens the very life of the soul itself is known by at least two persons, God and yourself, God and myself. It is that besetting sin, perhaps a secret one which, unless we meet it in mortal combat and "by His wonderful power, by His grace every hour" remorselessly ride it down to death, will prove our undoing and involve us at last in spiritual bankruptcy more awful than the loss of the world's whole treasure.

"I digged a grave and laid within
Its secret depths one secret sin;
I closed the grave and know full well
That day I shut myself in hell."

There is a better way than that.

W. E. B.

*Ulysses and the
Laestrygonians*

*Sin, The Subtilty of
Sin, The Allurements of*

81

Acts 27.13; I John 2.15.16; Prov. 14.12

Among the many adventures of Ulysses and his companions on their return from the siege of

Troy was their encounter with the Laestrygonians, a savage tribe of people of powerful build who dwelt among the hills and along the shores of a spacious and beautiful cove entirely locked by land. As the storm-tossed sailors looked in a most inviting aspect greeted their eyes. Above the blue skies were smiling, and the warm sun playing upon the waters turned their ripples into shining silver. The green trees on the wooded heights were shining with amber light while emerald-colored cascades leaped and played among them, and the whole landscape was one of entrancing beauty, while the warm zephyrs blowing gently lulled and lured them on. Ulysses, with his usual sagacity, bethought himself of possible danger and remained without but all the other ships sailed in, "for surely," they said, "in such a place as this no evil can befall us." But once within they found themselves completely within the power of the Laestrygonians, who attacked them, hurling huge stones upon them which broke and overturned their vessels, while with their spears they dispatched the seamen as they struggled in the water. "There is a way," you know, "which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Sin beckons with its bewitching smile, and it comes sometimes clothed with a show of reason, and with conscience warped by prejudice and self-interest the sinner, and oftentimes the thoughtless saint, is

lulled and lured by specious argument into ways where God is not found. How true this is of the sober, well-behaved worlding. Everywhere is beauty, attractiveness and pleasing indulgence. But he does not know that the perfumed excitements of this world, like Cleopatra's asp that came in a bouquet of flowers, have in them all too often the sting of death. Better sail the open sea with Ulysses than anchor in the land-locked cove of the Laestrygonians.

W. E. B.

*Arion and the
Dolphin*

*Sin, Tell-Tale
Finding the Sinner Out*

82

Num. 32.23; I Sam. 15.14; Gen. 4.7.10; Matt. 10.26

When Dr. Harvey Hawley Crippen, who murdered his wife, stepped off the boat at Quebec with Miss Ethel Claire Laneve, his stenographer disguised in male attire, the officers of the law were waiting for them at the end of the gangway. The ether waves bearing the news from the good ship Montrose traveled faster than the guilty pair. It is said of Arion that he was a famous musician. He won a prize in Sicily and embarked with his wealth in a ship for his home in Corinth. On the way he heard the seamen plotting to possess themselves of his great wealth,

and surrounding him they told him he must die. He offered them his wealth for his life, but this they refused lest he might expose them in later days. He then begged one last favor, that he might play once more upon his lyre and so ravishing was his music that it drew the inhabitants of the deep around the ship and dolphins followed as if chained by a spell. Suddenly Arion sprang overboard, and while he struggled a dolphin offered him his back and bore him safe to land. He made his way to the court of King Periander with whom he dwelt, and told his story, and when the ship arrived the king summoned the mariners before him and asked concerning Arion. They said, "We left him well and prosperous at Tarentum." At this moment Arion stepped forth clad in gold and purple, whereupon they fell prostrate at his feet as if a lightning bolt had struck them.

If there is any one thing that is sure in the universe of God it is this, "Be sure your sin will find you out." It is true, as some one has said, that if you do not find your sin out and bring it to God for pardon, your sin will find you out and bring you to God for condemnation. Indeed it is true, and when you arrive at the judgment day you will find that your sin will have gone ahead ready to accuse you at the bar of eternal justice.

*Thetis Burning
Her Children**Sin, Trifling With
Temptation, Subjected to*

83

Matt. 18.6; I Cor. 8.9-13; James 1.27; Matt. 16.6

Parents who argue that a child must know the world of sin, and that the child has less inclination for its pleasures by being familiarized with them will find a lesson in the story of Thetis, who stands as the representative of foolish mothers. She desired for her children immortal natures, and herself placed them into a fire, believing that the mortal and the gross would be consumed, and that the pure and immortal would remain. It is needless to say that she lost the six which were subjected to the process, and Achilles, the seventh, would have also been consumed had not Peleus, his mortal father, rescued him.

Her folly and her grief have their modern parallel in that philosophy and its effects, which would cure one of sin by making him familiar with it. How absurd to believe that one shall be preserved to purity by associating with impurity; to goodness by becoming acquainted with evil! It is true that we come through temptation to whiteness of soul, but it is the temptation that finds us out, and not the one we voluntarily enter. "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation," the Master said, and it is ridiculous for us to pray

'as He taught us, "Lead us not into temptation," and to then deliberately walk into it ourselves or take others in, and expect immunity.

George MacAdams.

Aneas Avoiding Scylla and Charybdis *Sin, Trifling With Temptation, Avoiding*

84

I Cor. 10.13; Eph. 5.15; Prov. 4.14, 15; Ps. 1.1

"How long have you been a pilot on these waters?" asked a young man on one of our big steamers.

"Twenty-five years," the old man replied.

"Then," said the young man, "I should think you must know every rock and sandbank in the river."

"Oh, no, I don't," replied the old pilot, as he smiled at the youth's simplicity, "but I know where the deep water is."

And this is what we need to know on life's voyage—where the safe water is, where the safe path is, and to keep it. How much more wisely did Aneas choose than Ulysses. There was a dangerous strait upon the sea which could be avoided by a little longer journey coasting along the island of Sicily. Ulysses, however, chose to

go through the strait which was guarded on one side by a six-headed monster serpent in a cave who was accustomed to thrust forth her long neck and in each of her six mouths seize one of the crew of every vessel passing within her reach. On the other side was a deadly whirlpool known as Charybdis, in which any vessel coming too near must inevitably be engulfed. While the roaring waters of Charybdis gave Ulysses warning, Scylla was no where to be seen, and while intent on avoiding the whirlpool, Scylla, darting forth her snaky head, caught six of his men and bore them shrieking away into her den. Aneas, sailing from Troy to Italy and having been cautioned by Helenus, decided to take no risk. He followed the safer course along the island coast, and so came with all his crew safe to harbor in the mouth of the Tiber. May God help us to be as wise as Aneas. It is not necessary, young man, to know the dark and seamy side of life, and assuredly if one trifles with temptation and courts danger he will go down. The subtle allurements of the flesh are so desperate in their power that to trifle with them is to be as foolhardy as Ulysses.

W. E. B.



*Ulysses and
Circe**Sin, Victory Over
Temptation, Secure in
Temperance*

85

Rom. 8.2; Col. 1.13, 14; Prov. 23.32; I Cor. 10.13

One of the most interesting stories about Ulysses tells of his adventures with Circe, the daughter of the sun. Hawthorne tells of it with charming interest in his "Tanglewood Tales." Ulysses with his sailors was sailing home after the battle of Troy. One day after a voyage full of disastrous mishaps they came in sight of a small island fringed 'round about with inviting green foliage. He anchored his tempest-beaten bark in a quiet cove of the island, and began a tour of inspection. He climbed into a tree, and in the very center of the island he saw a palace embowered with trees. He sent one half of his number to see what hospitality they might find. It was the palace of Circe, a powerful magician, who, by her magic, changed all who came into her palace into the form of beasts, tigers, lions, wolves, or whatever pleased her fancy most. The visitors entered and were royally entertained and feasted with wines and choicest delicacies. But no sooner had they drank than she touched them

with her wand, and they were turned to swine. Milton makes use of this in his "Comus":

"Soon as the potion works, their human countenance,
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,
Or ounce or tiger, hog or bearded goat.
And they so perfect in their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before:
And all their friends and native home forget
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty."

But now Ulysses comes to investigate their fate. On the way he is met by one of the gods who told him of his danger, and gave him a certain flower with wonderful power to resist the sorceries of the enchantress. Circe received him royally, and when she had given him the wine, she cried, "Hence! seek the sty and wallow with thy friends!" But he had the magic flower with him, and her charms were powerless. He drew his sword and she begged for mercy, which he gave on condition that she restore his companions. She did so and once more they sailed on their way to Ithaca.

The youth who met Ulysses was the god Mercury, and the flower that protected him was a

rare and precious specimen. The flower for the Christian is the Rose of Sharon; it is the Lily of the Valley, pure, sweet and strong. That flower is Jesus Christ, whom God gave that we might be free from sin. No matter what the enchantment be; the wine when it sparkles; those eyes that look visions of lust; let it be what it will, Jesus Christ is strong to deliver; He can save you out of the very mouth of hell. Have you tried Him? Do you know Him? Yield to Him today.

W. E. B.

*Perseus and
the Dragon*

*Social Evils, Destruction of
Immediate Action, Necessity of*

86

I Sam. 21.8; Eph. 6.13-18; Jud. 5.23; John 9.4

There are some monster perils besetting the youth of the land. Many a mother has wept tears in my presence because the saloon or gambling hell has gotten her boy. But tears enough have been shed, what are we doing to save them? It is high time to strike the blow that will put an end to the peril.

When Cassiopia, the queen of the Ethiopians, had aroused the indignation of the goddesses by comparing their beauty with hers, they sent a horrid sea monster to ravage her coasts. It was

hoped to appease their anger by exposing Andromeda, the beautiful daughter of the queen, on the rocks for the monster to devour. Perseus, one of the gods, discovered her there, and scarcely had he spoken to her, than the frightful sound of the monster was heard as he came rushing through the water, upon his prey. The virgin shrieked while the mother and father stood by weeping. Then cried Perseus and said, "There will be time enough for tears; this hour is all we have for rescue"; and straightway he flew upon the mighty monster and rested only when he had slain him.

W. E. B.

*Antiope and
Dirce**Sowing and Reaping
Spiritual Harvest
Sin, The Reward of*

87

Gal. 6.7; Job 13.9; II Cor. 9.6; Hos. 8.7

"The tissues of the life to be—
We weave with colors all our own;
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown."

There is a celebrated group of statuary known as "The Farnese Bull" now in the museum at Naples. It holds you amazed at the masterly workmanship of its author. It was chiseled by

Apollonius and has for its subject the punishment of Dirce. Antiope, queen of Thebes, was wooed by Jupiter. She bore him Amphion at the music of whose lyre the stones moved of their own accord and took their place in the building of the walls of Thebes. Another son she bore, Zethus, the mighty hunter. These were twins and at their birth, being exposed on the mountain, grew up among the shepherds knowing nothing of their parentage. In the meantime Antiope fell into the hands of Lycus, the usurping king of Thebes, who at the instigation of Dirce, his wife, treated her with great cruelty. The outrage ended by Dirce demanding that Antiope be dragged to death behind a bull and that her two sons be ordered to be the executors of the cruel sentence. But Antiope had discovered means by which she communicated to her children her own kinship to them and their own right to the throne. Gathering a band of their fellow herdsmen they attacked the king and slew him, and tying Dirce by the hair of her head to the bull, let her perish by her own device.

The Word of God says, "Whosoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," and human history is filled with illustrations of this solemn truth. Having stung his father's heart, Jacob's own home becomes a nest of hissing vipers. Having destroyed another's home through lust, David had his own destroyed through the lust of his wicked son. Having erected in deepest malice

a scaffold fifty cubits high for the Jew he hated, Haman later was hung upon it while Mordecai went to the throne. Having slain her husband that her son might ascend the throne, Nero's mother was next slain by her son to make that throne secure. Having originated the bitter cruelties of the French revolution, Robespierre, the once mighty, fell headless beneath the bloody guillotine. The law of spiritual harvest touches life all the way from the cradle to the judgment throne of God and farther. It pays a man in his own coin. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." Sow the wind and you shall reap the whirlwind. Better a thousand times, yes, infinitely, to do the will of God, for there will come, though delayed for a time, a terrible day of wrath, the harvest of the whirlwinds to sweep away the glory and to destroy the hopes of the wicked.

W. E. B.



<i>Ariadne and the Silken Cord</i>	<i>Sympathy Encouragement</i>
<i>Theseus Slaying the Minotaur</i>	<i>Satan, Overcoming The Word of God a Sword</i>

88

Phil. 2.1; Gal. 6.12; I John 3.17; Mal. 3.16;
Eph. 6.17; I John 3.8; I Tim. 6.12; Matt. 4.4, 7, 10

Ariadne was the daughter of the king of Crete, and Theseus was the son of the king of Greece. There are several mythological legends about their love for each other, but none more beautiful than that of the incident connected with the slaying of the Minotaur by this young hero. The Minotaur was a mighty monster with a bull's body and a human head. His home was in a cave with labyrinthine windings so artfully conceived that whoever entered could never find his way out unassisted. Seven Athenian youths and seven maidens were devoured by this monster every year as a tribute from Athens to Minos, king of Crete. The Athenians were in deep sorrow on this account, and Theseus determined to slay the monster. He offered himself as one of the yearly victims, and when with the others he was exhibited before the king of Crete, Ariadne, the king's daughter, was present and became deeply enamored of the young Athenian. Her love was returned. She furnished him a sword and when he entered the cave she tied a silken cord to his

ankle, and told him that whenever he felt her pull upon the cord he would know she was thinking of his bravery, and that in his danger he might be assured of her sympathy and her love. The sympathetic pull of the cord so inspired and encouraged him that the monster was slain by his sword.

There is many a poor fellow fighting a hard battle all alone. He is almost down in the struggle with sin. His passion has assumed a monster mien. His doubts have become far more serious than he ever expected they would. He's trying to do a good work in a hard field, and the discouragements have almost overwhelmed him. You may not be able to do much to help him, so you think, but a cheer will put new life into him. A little encouragement helps a great deal, and many a man has failed for the want of it. A signal of love, of interest, of sympathy, of prayer, will sometimes bring victory where defeat seemed certain.

W. E. B.

*Aneas Avoiding
Scylla and Charybdis*

*Temptation,
Avoiding*

89

Ps. 1.1; Rom. 12.9; Prov. 1.10; Prov. 4.14, 15

A man, desiring a coachman, asked of several applicants for the position, how near they could drive to a precipice without going over it. One

said a foot, another eight inches, and one even said he could drive within four inches of any precipice without accident. But another said he did not know, because he always tried to keep as far away as possible from every precipice. "You are just the driver I am looking for," said the man, and he hired him.

It is better to avoid danger than to trifle with it; better to go around temptation than to go through it at a risk, the more especially when nothing is to be gained by the venture.

Scylla was a long-necked monster that dwelt in a cave in the side of a cliff. Whenever a vessel passed through the strait she thrust forth her unsightly neck with its six heads, and seized one of the crew. On the other side of the waterway was a whirlpool, Charybdis, into which the waters rushed with deafening noise, and any vessel coming near must inevitably be lost. Ulysses and his crew had been warned of these dread monsters. They drew near; Scylla was nowhere to be seen, but Charybdis was roaring with fury. Ulysses watched carefully against Charybdis, but was not equally on guard against Scylla, who reached out her snaky heads and seized six of his companions and dragged them shrieking back into her den.

Aneas did better than that. He, too, had been warned of the dangerous strait, and instead of attempting a passageway through, he avoided it

altogether and sailed around by the coast of Sicily.

Some people pray "Lead us not into temptation" and worthwith walk with open eyes directly into it.

W. E. B.

The experience of Ulysses with Scylla and Charybdis may be used also to show how some people avoid the grosser and more open sins of life, but are not equally on their guard against the apparently less heinous, but insidious sins like neglect of duty, worldliness, etc.

*The Enchanted
Hill*

*Temptations, Subtlety of
Worldly Allurements*

90

Prov. 14.12; James 1.14, 15; Heb. 12.1; Matt. 16.26

There is an oriental story which describes an enchanted hill, whose summit concealed an object of incomparable worth. It was offered as a prize to him who should ascend the hill without looking behind him; but whoever ventured to secure this treasure was told that if he did look backward he would be instantly changed into stone. Many a princely youth, allured by the tempting prize, had ventured up that fatal hill, and as many had been changed into stone, for the adjacent groves were filled with most melodious voices and with birds of sweetest song, whose bewitching strains and

enticements followed each youth as he ascended, until he suffered his curiosity to control his hopes and fears, turned his head and instantly became a stone.

Hence, said the story, the hillside was covered with stones. To every young man, life is such an enchanted hill, with its thousands of alluring voices and its unnumbered victims, who have listened to some fatal charmer and have perished.

Selected.

*Grillus Enamoured of Total Depravity
the Hog Sty Spiritual Taste, Debased*

91

I Tim. 4.2; II Tim. 3.4; Rom. 1.24; John 3.19

In the AEaean isle dwelt Circe, the daughter of the sun, who, with her powerful magic, had turned the companions of Ulysses into swine, "head, body, voice and bristles," but with their intellect as before. She shut them up in sties and fed them swill and such other food as swine like. Ulysses, determined upon their resuce, provided himself, through the kind offices of Mercury, with a spring of a certain plant endowed with power to resist sorcery. He thus overcame the magic art of Circe and compelled her to restore and release his companions.

Austin Dobson, in his "Prayer of the Swine to Circe," true to the record of the myth, sets forth what would be the natural complaint of men under such conditions:

"O Unmerciful! O Pitiless!
Leave us not thus with sick men's hearts to
bleed!
To waste long days in yearning, dumb,
distress.
. . . . Make us men again."

But Fenelon has imagined a dialogue between Ulysses and Grillus, one of the men whom Circe had made into a hog. Strange to say Grillus would not consent to be brought back again to manhood. He said,

"No, the life of a hog is so much pleasanter."
"But," said Ulysses, "do you make no account of eloquence, poetry and music?"
"No, I would rather grunt than be eloquent like you."

"But," asked Ulysses, "how can you endure this nastiness and stench?"

"It all depends," said Grillus, "on the taste; the odor is sweeter to me than that of amber, and the filth than the nectar of the gods."

It is a fact that one of the worst curses of sin is the insensibility of the sinner to his sin. But it is said that some men can become so enamoured of the swine troughs of moral obliquity as to pride themselves on their insensibility—men like

Grillus, who have sunk so low in the abyss of spiritual impotence, they cannot hear the voice of God calling them back to liberty and to life.

W. E. B.

*Antaeus and His
Betrayal*

*Traitor, The
Money, Love of*

92

Heb. 12.6; Matt. 26.15; Job 6.27; Lam. 1.2

There are some men you cannot buy. Had it not been for the treachery of one who was willing to sell himself for gold, Hercules would doubtless have gone down to defeat in the trial of his strength with that of Anateus. This man, so one of the stories go concerning him, was of a dwarf-like stature and a most unlikely sort of an opponent for the mighty Hercules, but in spite of all that Hercules could do he could not succeed in overpowering his strange antagonist, and while the great crowd ridiculed and jeered him he skulked away, beaten and humiliated, to his tent. But that night the traitor came, the false friend of the strange wrestler, who knew the secret of Antaeus' strength. The defeated giant was sullen and resented the intrusion, but the stranger came close and whispered in his ear, "Gold, gold, give me gold, and I will tell you why you were

defeated and how you can win tomorrow.” And when the price was given he told Hercules who his adversary really was and, how, if he would lift him from the earth, from which he derived his strength, he could quickly overcome him. For a few pieces of shining gold this wretched man had betrayed his friend. And so many another man has done, Judas Iscariot, Marino Faliero, Benedict Arnold, and others that might be mentioned. But thank God, there are some men who cannot be bought. I number among my friends a prominent Christian worker who was offered an enormous sum to forsake the work he was doing for the young men of the world to become the head of a great oriental banking concern, and who replied with a quiver on his lip, “I am only sorry, gentlemen, that I have so lived in your presence that you could so much have dreamed that I would be even tempted by such an offer.” When Robert E. Lee was offered \$20,000 a year for the use of his name as president of the Louisiana Lottery, though stripped of everything he had by the destinies of the Civil war, he replied, “Gentlemen, my name is all I have left and that is not for sale.”

“The plague of gold strikes far and near,
And deep and strong it enters;
The purple chimar which we wear
Makes madder than the centaur’s;

Our thoughts grow blank, our words grow
strange,
We cheer the pale gold diggers;
Each soul is worth so much on 'Change,
And marked, like sheep, in figures,
Be pitiful, O God."

Mrs. Browning.

W. E. B.

*Argus and His
Hundred Eyes*

*Watchfulness
World, The Seductive
Charm of*

93

I Cor. 16.13; Prov. 8.34; I Tim. 6.10; Rev. 16.15

Sleeping at one's post is carelessness of the most perilous sort. It has cost the sacrifice of armies, and the downfall of nations. We need not be reminded that life is a warfare, and that there are enemies of the soul all about us waiting the opportune time of attack. "Therefore," says Paul, "let us not sleep, but let us watch and be sober."

Argus is fabled to have had a hundred eyes, only two of which ever went to sleep at the same time. He was given a charge by Juno, over which he was warned to keep constant guard. Jupiter sent Mercury to slay him. Mercury donned his slippers and his cap, took his sleep-

producing wand, and started on his mission. He disguised himself as a shepherd, and with his flock, strolled along to where Argus was at his post of duty. Mercury was playing upon his pipes. These pipes were the pipes of Pan, and had, as you know, an interesting history connected with them. The music of the pipes charmed Argus, and he invited the young shepherd to take a seat by his side where he could conveniently watch his flock as it grazed. Mercury sat down, talked, told stories and played upon the instruments until it was late. He thought in this way he might lull Argus to sleep, but he only partially succeeded, for although Argus did shut a number of his eyes, he managed to keep a large number of them open. At length, as Mercury played, he told the interesting story of how Pan happened to make the pipes, and as he played and talked, even before he had finished the story, he saw the head of Argus nod forward on his breast; and his eyes were all closed. Then with one stroke of his sword Mercury cut his neck through, and the head of Argus, with its truant eyes, rolled down upon the rocks.

This world has a thousand charms to lure us on to ruin. Mighty Spirit of God, quicken every spiritual sense, lest we be "seduced from the faith and pierce ourselves through with many sorrows."

*Ulysses and the
Winds**Watchfulness
Curiosity*

94

I Cor. 9.27; II Peter 3.17; I Cor. 16.13; Acts 20.31

When Ulysses departed from the Aeolian Islands, he was given by Aeolus, the god of the winds, all the adverse and stormy tempests and winds which might otherwise be sent upon him and his fleet. They were tied up in a bag, which Ulysses carefully guarded every moment. This manifest care attracted the attention of the sailors, who imagined that it must be some great treasure, and so while he was asleep one day, took the bag from under his head and opened it. Immediately all the winds rushed forth and became mighty tempests which beat them back to the port just as they had come in sight of Attica and home.

The thought is very true of human life, that each carries with it the possibilities of evil, which in temper, passion and appetite, are in the unguarded moment let loose upon the sea of our life, and raise storms that beat us back just as we have come in sight of the goal and ambition of many years of voyaging. The tendency with us is to find someone else to blame for it, but a close scrutiny of nearly every wreck will

reveal that someone fell asleep upon the bag of adverse winds. "What I say unto you, I say unto all. Watch."

George MacAdams.

*Jason and the
Golden Fleece*

*Wealth, The
Dangers of*

95

Mark 4.9; I Tim. 6.9; Matt. 6.19, 20; Jer. 9.23

Some things cost more than they are worth. Mercury had given to Phrixus a ram with a golden fleece that he might escape on it from the dangers that threatened him in his own country. He came to Colchis and there sacrificed the ram to Jupiter and made a gift of its fleece to Acetus, the king. But to keep this gift Acetus was at tremendous pains, for it was greatly coveted, and must be guarded night and day by a faithful dragon. And when finally Jason secured it, in his effort to retake it, the king lost his son and heir as well as his daughter Medea, who fled with Jason.

And it is true that many of the earthly treasures that come as gifts costs us more than they are worth. He was a wise pastor who arose in his pulpit one morning and asked the prayers of the congregation for a young man who had just fallen heir to a large fortune. There are many

men, who, to guard and nourish the business which they have developed, are required to give more and more of that life which in its value is above comparison with the business. The duties and pleasures of the home, the companionship of books, the association of choice friends are all given up, and some men have given their souls to guard earthly treasures. More and more must the world appreciate the philosophy of Jesus, who said, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

George MacAdams.

*Circe and Her
Magic Wand*

*Word of God, Transforming
Word of God, Power of*

96

Heb. 4.12; I Peter 1.23; Eph. 6.17; John 5.3

Oh, the transforming power of the Word of God, its power to make completely over a human life that has been broken and ruined and lost. The magic wand of Circe metamorphosised men into brutes. As the companions of Ulysses approached the palace of this powerful magician wondering what hospitality they might find, they found themselves surrounded by tigers, wolves and lions, not fierce, but tamed by Circe's art.

These animals had once been men, but had been changed into the forms of beasts by the enchantments of this cruel daughter of the sun. The companions of Ulysses, you may recall, she touched with her wand, and immediatey they changed each one, "head, body, voice and bristles" into a swine. But the Word of God changes brutes into true men and into the very image of the Son of man. This is the miracle of divine grace, changing neither form nor substance but extirpating sin and implanting holiness in the soul. It restrains lust and curbs sinful propensities, and lifts foul and unholy men up to a place of virtue and respectability. It takes brutish men and puts kindness in their hearts; it takes the drunken sot and put sobriety there; it takes the thief and puts honesty there; it takes the libertine and the harlot and puts purity there, until millions have borne witness to its mighty power working for righteousness in heart and mind and soul, and to the thrill of a new and divine life in the very quick of their being.

W. E. B.



*Eriphyle and the
Necklace of Harmonia**World, Lure of*

97

Matt. 26.15; Matt. 13.22; Titus 2.12; II Tim. 4.10

There are some people who price honor and manhood very cheaply. Amphiaraus, a soothsayer of Argus, who had been given the knowledge of future events, knew the now celebrated expedition against Thebes, as proposed by his brother-in-law, King Adrastus, would end in dire disaster. But upon his marriage to the king's sister, Eriphyle, he had agreed in every case of dispute with the king, to leave the decision with his wife. Eriphyle was well informed of the certain outcome of the expedition if undertaken; she knew that none, save Adrastus, would return alive, and that even her own husband would be slain with all the rest, but for the sake of a bribe, a costly ornament that stirred her vanity, she played false to her country and to her lord, Amphiaraus. When Cadmus married Harmonia, the daughter of Venus, the bride was presented by Vulcan with a necklace of surpassing brilliancy and of his own workmanship. This necklace Polynices, who was urging the war against his brother who had usurped the throne of Thebes, had brought with him when he fled from Thebes to seek the aid of Adrastus. He knew the decision rested with Eriphyle and so he offered to her

the necklace of Harmonia if she would decide the matter at issue in his own interests. Eriphyle could not resist a temptation so strong, and for the sake of the alluring bribe she threw her decision on the side of war and sent Amphiaraus, her husband, and all his companions, to their certain fate. For a glittering ornament, the showy tinsel of this world, Eriphyle forgot her honor, her martial vow, her duty to her country and to her kin and stultified her own soul by the thoughtless and wicked act to which she lent herself. And so many another, for the alluring attractions of this world, for its pleasures, for its glory and its gold, has forgotten his duty to himself, to his neighbor and to his God. Let the Christian beware of this world lest it cause him like Demas to forsake the way of true riches for the husks that never satisfy. And the man who has never acknowledged God, "What shall it profit him if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

W. E. B.

*Atalanta and Her
Footrace*

*Worldliness
Temptation
Race of Life*

98

Heb. 12.1, 2; I Cor. 9.24; Rev. 2.10; II Tim. 2.4

Atalanta was a great athlete. She felt herself to be the swiftest runner in the land. She

had many suitors, for she was very beautiful. But having been warned that marriage would be her ruin, she saw her way of escape in offering her hand to that suitor who would beat her in a footrace. Said she, "I will be the prize of him who will conquer me in a race; but death must be the penalty of all who try and fail." Scores of young men entered the contest in spite of the hard condition. One after another they were defeated, and they were put to death without mercy. Hippomenes, a splendid and most handsome youth, thought it very rash that anyone should risk so much for a wife, but when he saw Atalanta he changed his mind, and offered himself for the contest, although it did not look as though he had any chance of winning.

The race started, and the contestants flew around the course. Atalanta easily out-distanced her competitor, although she almost wished he might defeat her, for he was so young and handsome. Now Hippomenes had calculated more wisely than Atalanta knew. He had taken with him into the race, three golden apples, which he carried in concealment. He spun one of the apples along the course in front of the maiden. Atalanta was all amazement; she wanted the glittering thing, and thinking she had an easy victory, stopped to pick it up, and Hippomenes shot ahead of her. The spectators cheered him on, but Atalanta was soon in advance once more. He threw a second apple, this time off a little to one

side, and a second time the maiden determined to secure the apple, and left the course to do it. Again her suitor ran ahead, but again Atalanta came up and passed. But now the goal is near. Atalanta was weighted with the two apples, and Hippomenes was correspondingly lighter. He threw the last golden apple. She looked at it and hesitated, but again did the lust of greed take possession of her, and she stopped to gather up the third golden ball. Hippomenes, lightened by the absence of the weight, taking advantage of Atalanta's delay, flew away in advance to the goal that was just before. He won a race; he won a bride, and the story says her kingdom went with her.

Are we "pressing forward toward the mark for the prize of high calling?" Are we "running with patience the race that is set before us?" Then must we "forget those things which are behind," and "lay aside every weight," and run the race. Many a maiden and many a youth has entered the course of life full of beauty and power, but have trifled with sin and given up to self-indulgence until they have fallen in the way, shamed and ruined through their weakness. The world, the flesh and the devil will all try to entice you from the way. On every side will come whispered suggestions of compromise. The golden apple will glitter before you. There is but one thing to do; keep your eye on the goal, and then

looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith, you will go on to certain victory.

W. E. B.

*Ulysses and the
Lotus Eaters*

*Worldliness, Lure of
Worldly Amusements*

99

Luke 21.34; Col. 3.2; Rom. 12.2; Jas. 4.4

Among the adventures of Ulysses and his companions on their return from the siege of Troy, was their experience in the country of the Lotus eaters. After anchoring their ships, Ulysses sent three of his men inland to learn something of the inhabitants. The men were treated with great hospitality and given some of the Lotus plant to eat. The effect of this food was so pleasing to the senses as to cause those who ate of it to lose all thought of home and loved ones, and wish only to stay in the land forever. Ulysses waited, but his men did not return, and when discovered they would not leave. By main force the men were dragged on board, and when they were securely tied beneath the benches of Ulysses' ship, the company sailed away.

Just so, there is a land the fruit of which has a similar effect upon the soul. It is the realm of worldliness, into which so many Christians have wandered, and where so many worldlings live.

James tells us that to live there is to be at enmity with God; and to indulge yourself in its fruits and flowers is to do so at your peril. So sweet are they to the carnal nature that they throw a charm about the soul, and so mightily are some held in their power that it seems that if they ever escape, they must be torn away by force. God, the best interests of the soul, and the concern they should have for the spiritual welfare of the home and loved ones, are all forgotten.

We know of a professing Christian who excused herself to her boy from attending a revival meeting, that she might keep an engagement at a progressive euchre party, and for ten years her boy has been living in sin.

W. E. B.

*Avernus and the
Infernal Region*

*Worldliness, Its
Stupefying Effects*

100

Luke 21.34; I Tim. 5.6; James 1.27; Rom. 12.2

In the volcanic region 'round about Vesuvius there is a body of water known as Lake Avernus. It was believed by the ancients to be the entrance to the infernal regions, and possibly more than any other spot known to them, was strikingly calculated to excite ideas of the monstrous and the supernatural. Sulphurous flames and poisonous

pent-up gases pour out from the volcanic clefts, while from down beneath come the mysterious sounds and the strange mumblings of the underworld. Noxious vapors arise from the surface of the waters; no plant can grow upon its banks, and the luckless bird that tries to wing its way across, weakens, flutters, and drops stupefied down to death.

Through this way the Sybil led Aeneas along the path to Hades, and mythology has told us that travelers destined for the lower world were here so affected by the stupefying vapors that they could face with something of composure the awful horrors toward which their tendencies were hurrying them along.

Like this is the Avernus of modern worldliness. There is an atmosphere about it into which let the soul once come, and all the spiritual sensibilities are stupefied as by a noxious narcotic. It has been the dread way to death, and the entrance to the infernal regions for unnumbered thousands, who, because of its deadly influence upon the soul, have become indifferent to the fearful issue of a life lived in sin.

W. E. B.



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